

**DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE: A STUDY
OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR IN GHANA.**

by

ALBERT ADJEI ANANI-BOSSMAN

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

Communication

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: Professor Takalani E. Mudzanani

June 2018

DECLARATION

Name: Albert Adjei Anani-Bossman
Student number: 55716423
Degree: Doctor of Literature and Philosophy (Communication)
Thesis title: Developing a framework for public relations practice: A study of the financial services sector in Ghana.

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



Signature

June, 2018

Date

Acknowledgement

The saying that 'no man is an island' definitely proved to be the case in the development of this thesis. I could not have completed this work without the assistance of the many people who played various parts in one way or the other. I would therefore like to thank the following:

- I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the almighty God for the grace and strength he gave me throughout this period. Indeed, there were times I felt like giving up but His word always sustained and strengthened me.
- Special appreciation goes to my supervisor, Professor Takalani E. Mudzanani, for his immense support and contribution to this work. Being a young scholar who had embarked on this new journey, I was not certain of what I needed to do, but his continuous support, guidance and suggestions have been immense in finishing this work. No amount of words can really express my gratitude to this wonderful man, except to say the Lord bless you a thousand fold for all the effort you put into this work.
- This research would not have been completed without the contribution of the research participants. I therefore wish to extend my sincere gratitude to all the research participants who took time off their busy schedules to assist me with my data collection.
- To my beloved family, my wife Sheila and children Aileen, Shaun and Albert Jnr., for your patience and tolerance even as I left you alone for long periods at a time just to do this project. You have been a great support and God bless you.
- To my colleagues at the Department of Communication Studies at the Pentecost University College, I thank you for your constant encouragement.
- Finally, to my friend and mentor, Professor Kwabena Kwansah-Aidoo of Swinburne University of Technology, Australia, thank you for your advice and counselling during the initial stages of this thesis.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wonderful family, my wife Sheila and children Aileen, Shaun and Albert Jnr.

ABSTRACT

The goal of the study was to develop a framework for public relations practice in the financial services sector. The study was based on four key objectives. In line with the **first objective**, chapters 2 and 3 reviewed how public relations was conceptualised and practiced by reviewing literature. Three worldviews, the North American, the European and African worldviews, were discussed by looking at their similarities and differences. The literature also reviewed the development of public relations from these three perspectives. Literature revealed that different models influence practices in different cultural settings and that effective PR practice cannot be premised on a single model.

Objectives 2, 3 and 4 empirically analysed the conceptualisation and practice of public relations in terms of the purpose (models) and roles (activities). The study employed the one-on-one interview technique to gauge the views of communication managers in the financial services sector. The result of the study was discussed and analysed in chapter 5. Findings showed that PR was not strategic and mostly had a marketing orientation. Significantly, most of the communication managers had marketing backgrounds, which invariably affected their concept and practice of public relations. Another key finding was that public relations measurement and evaluation was based on outputs and outtakes more than outcomes. Moreover, methods used were mostly unscientific in nature. PR strategies were based on audience satisfaction surveys rather than perception and attitudinal research. Practitioners are not part of the dominant coalition. The findings showed that practitioners faced a number of challenges that compromised the effectiveness of their work, including management's value and perception of their work, lack of in-depth knowledge about the profession itself, budgetary constraints and inability to sometimes influence decisions because of their position in the organisational structure.

The findings of the study, together with findings in the literature, were used to develop a framework for effective PR practice in the sector. The framework differs in certain aspects from some of the recommendations made by literature for excellent public relations practice. The

framework also incorporates recommendations aligning to the reality of public relations practice within the Ghanaian cultural and political environment.

Key words: framework, relationship management, symmetrical communication, public relations practice, culture, model, strategic, excellent communication, worldview, stakeholder, relationship building.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van die studie was om 'n raamwerk vir openbare betrekkinge praktyk in die finansiële dienste sektor te ontwikkel. Die studie was gebaseer op vier sleutel doelwitte. In lyn met die eerste doel het hoofstukke 2 en 3 nagegaan hoe openbare betrekkinge gekonseptualiseer en beoefen word deur literatuur te hersien. Drie wêreldbeskouings, die Noord-Amerikaanse, die Europese en Afrika-wêreldbeskouings, is bespreek deur na hul ooreenkomste en verskille te kyk. Die literatuur het ook die ontwikkeling van openbare betrekkinge vanuit hierdie drie perspektiewe nagegaan. Literatuur het aan die lig gebring dat verskillende modelle praktyke in verskillende kulturele instellings beïnvloed en dat effektiewe PR praktyk nie op 'n enkele model voorgestel kan word nie.

Doelwitte 2, 3 en 4 het die konseptualisering en beoefening van openbare betrekkinge empiries ontleed ten opsigte van die doel (modelle) en rolle (aktiwiteite). Die studie het die een-tot-een-onderhoudstegniek gebruik om die sienings van kommunikasiebestuurders in die finansiële dienste sektor te meet. Die uitslag van die studie is in hoofstuk 5 bespreek en ontleed. Bevindinge het getoon dat PR nie strategies was nie en meestal bemerkingsoriëntering gehad het. Aansienlik het die meeste kommunikasiebestuurders bemerkingsagtergrond gehad, wat hul konsep en praktyk van openbare betrekkinge altyd beïnvloed het. Nog 'n belangrike bevinding was dat metings en evaluering van openbare betrekkinge gebaseer is op uitsette en uittreksels meer as uitkomst. Daarbenewens was die gebruik van metodes meestal onwetenskaplik van aard. PR strategieë was gebaseer op gehoor bevrediging opnames eerder as persepsie en houding navorsing. Praktisyne is nie deel van die dominante koalisie nie. Die bevindinge het getoon dat praktisyne 'n aantal uitdagings gekonfronteer het wat die doeltreffendheid van hul werk bekamp het, insluitend die waarde van die bestuur en die persepsie van hul werk, 'n gebrek aan grondige kennis oor die professie self, begrotingsbeperkings en onvermoë om soms besluite te beïnvloed weens hul posisie in die organisasiestruktuur.

Die bevindinge van die studie, tesame met bevindinge in die literatuur, is gebruik om 'n raamwerk vir effektiewe PR-praktyk in die sektor te ontwikkel. Die raamwerk verskil in sekere opsigte van sommige van die aanbevelings van die literatuur vir uitstekende openbare betrekkinge praktyk. Die raamwerk bevat ook aanbevelings wat ooreenstem met die realiteit van openbare betrekkinge praktyk binne die Ghanese kulturele en politieke omgewing.

Sleutelwoorde: raamwerk, verhoudingsbestuur, simmetriese kommunikasie, openbare betrekkinge praktyk, kultuur, model, strategiese, uitstekende kommunikasie, wêreldbeskouing, belanghebbende, verhoudingsgebou.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
TITLE PAGE	i
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ABSTRACTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvii
LIST OF TABLES	xviii
 CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION	 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	3
1.2.1 Overview of Ghana	5
1.2.1.1. <i>The Economy.....</i>	6
1.2.1.2. <i>The economic sector.....</i>	6
1.2.1.3. <i>The financial services sector.....</i>	7
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	7
1.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	9
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	10
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	11
1.7 THE PUBLIC RELATIONS INDUSTRY	12
1.8 GLOBALISATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	13
1.8.1. Brief overview of globalisation	13
1.8.2. Impact of globalisation on the public relations industry	15
1.8.3. Implications for global theory building	16
1.8.3.1. <i>Different public relations models practiced in different regions.....</i>	17
1.8.3.2. <i>Towards a generic principle of public relations.....</i>	20

1.9	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	22
1.9.1.	An historical overview of public relations	22
1.9.2.	Defining public relations	23
1.9.3.	Towards a conceptualised theory of public relations.....	27
1.9.3.1.	<i>The Excellence Theory</i>	27
1.9.3.2.	<i>Systems Theory</i>	28
1.9.3.3.	<i>Models of public relations practice</i>	28
1.9.4.	Public relations roles.....	30
1.9.5.	Public relations in the financial services sector.....	31
1.10	DEFINITION OF TERMS.....	32
1.11	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	33
1.11.1.	The research method	35
1.11.2.	Population	35
1.11.2.1.	<i>Accessible population</i>	36
1.11.3.	Sampling design	36
1.11.4.	Study area	38
1.11.5.	Data collection method	39
1.11.5.1.	Data collection techniques	39
1.11.6.	Data analysis method.....	39
1.11.7.	Data interpretation.....	41
1.12	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	42
1.13	FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY	43
1.14	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	43
1.15	ANTICIPATED FINDINGS	45
1.16	ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	45
1.17	SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	46
1.18	DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY	47
1.19	ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS.....	47
1.20	SUMMARY.....	48
CHAPTER 2:	WORLDVIEWS, PARADIGMS AND THEORIES OF THE STUDY	51
2.1	INTRODUCTION.....	51
2.2	CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE STUDY	51
2.2.1.	Difference between worldviews, paradigms, meta-theories and theories.....	52
2.2.2.	Paradigms framing the study	63

2.2.2.1. <i>The relational paradigm</i>	63
2.2.2.2. <i>Reflective paradigm</i>	66
2.2.2.3. <i>Two-way symmetrical communication paradigm</i>	67
2.2.2.3.1. <i>Criticisms of the symmetric paradigm</i>	70
2.2.3. Meta-theory used in the study	71
2.2.3.1. Inductive versus deductive reasoning.....	72
2.2.3.2. General excellence theory as a meta-theory	73
2.2.4. Theories used for the study.....	76
2.2.4.1. <i>The systems theory</i>	79
2.2.4.1.1. <i>Systems theory as applied to public relations</i>	81
2.2.4.1.2. <i>Linking the systems theory to the study</i>	85
2.2.4.2. <i>Relationship management theory</i>	86
2.2.4.2.1. <i>Linking the relationship management theory to the study</i>	90
2.2.5. Public relations as practiced in the financial services sector.....	90
2.3 SUMMARY	92
CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS	95
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	95
3.2 ORIGIN OF PUBLIC RELATIONS	95
3.2.1. North American development of public relations.....	99
3.2.2. Historical development of public relations in Europe.....	104
3.3 MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE	106
3.3.1. Models of public relations practice: North American perspectives.....	107
3.3.2. Models of public relations practice: European perspectives	111
3.3.3. Models of public relations practice: Non-western perspective.....	115
3.3.3.1. <i>The personal influence model</i>	117
3.3.3.2. <i>The cultural interpreter model</i>	118
3.4 PUBLIC RELATIONS IN AFRICA	120
3.4.1. Early beginnings.....	121
3.4.2. Development of public relations practice in Africa.....	122
3.4.3. Public relations and the African worldview	127
3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLE	131
3.5.1. Public relations roles: North American perspective	131

3.5.2.	Public relations roles: European perspectives	133
3.5.3.	Public relations roles in Africa	135
3.5.3.1.	The strategist role of South Africa.....	137
3.6	DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN GHANA	139
3.6.1.	Brief history of Ghana	140
3.6.2.	The landscape of modern public relations in Ghana	141
3.6.3.	PR roles in Ghana.....	147
3.7	SUMMARY	148
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		151
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	151
4.2	RESEARCH DESIGN	152
4.2.1	Qualitative research design.....	154
4.2.2	Sources of data	155
4.3	DATA COLLECTION	156
4.4	SAMPLING	157
4.4.1.	Defining the research population.....	159
4.4.1.1.	<i>Selecting the target population</i>	159
4.4.2.	Selecting the sample type	160
4.4.3.	Determining the sample size	160
4.4.4.	Data collection methods.....	163
4.4.4.1.	<i>The interview schedule</i>	164
4.4.4.2.	<i>The data gathering procedure</i>	165
4.4.5.	Data analysis and interpretation	166
4.5	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	170
4.6	ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	173
4.7	SUMMARY	175
CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS		176
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	176
5.2	OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS	177
5.3	FINDINGS OF ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW.....	180
5.3.1.	Research objective 2	180
5.3.2	Research objective 3	186

5.3.2.1.	<i>Press agency/publicity</i>	186
5.3.2.2.	<i>Public information</i>	206
5.3.2.3.	<i>Two-way asymmetric communication</i>	224
5.3.2.4.	<i>Two-way symmetric communication</i>	235
5.3.3.	Research objective 4	243
5.3.3.1.	<i>Technician role</i>	235
5.3.3.2.	<i>Managerial role</i>	247
5.3.4.	Concluding questions	260
5.4	A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE	266
5.4.1.	Theoretical statements for the proposed framework.....	266
5.5	SUMMARY.....	270

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE272

6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	272
6.2	SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	272
6.3	CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	275
6.3.1.	Conclusion on the conceptualisation of public relations by means of literature.....	275
6.3.2.	Conclusion on the conceptualisation of public relations by means of empirical data	276
6.3.3.	Conclusion on the selected models by means of empirical data.....	276
6.3.4.	Conclusions on the public relations roles by means of empirical data.....	277
6.4	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	278
6.4.1.	Training of department staff and management.....	278
6.4.2.	Focus on formal environmental scanning and evaluative research.....	279
6.4.3.	Separation of public relations functions from other functions.....	281
6.4.4.	Empowerment of the public relations manager in the decision making process.....	282
6.4.5.	Integration of communication functions across departments.....	282
6.4.6.	Two- way communication.....	283
6.4.7.	Development of social network policy.....	285
6.4.8.	A strong focus on advocacy role.....	286
6.5	THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK.....	286
6.5.1.	Explanation of the framework.....	287

6.5.1.1.	<i>Strategic Approach</i>	288
6.5.1.2.	<i>Symmetrical Approach</i>	289
6.5.1.3.	<i>Relational Approach</i>	290
6.6	FRAMEWORK JUSTIFICATION AND IMPLICATION FOR THEORY, POLICY AND PRACTICE.....	292
6.7	CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY.....	293
6.8	RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES.....	293
6.9	CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY.....	394
LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED.....		296
ADDENDUM A: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW GUIDE.....		337
ADDENDUM B: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.....		340
ADDENDUM C: CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET AND ETHICAL CONSENT FORM..		343
ADENDUM D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE.....		348
ADDENDUM E: UNISA POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS (2016).....		349

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AMEC	Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication
APR	Association in Public Relations
APRA	African Public Relations Association
AUCC	African University College of Communication
AVE	Advertising value equivalence
BC	Before Christ
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CIPR	Chartered Institute of Public Relations
CRM	Customer relationship management
EBOK	European Public Relations Body of Knowledge
EPRERA	European Public Relations Education and Research Association
FAPRA	Federation of African Public Relations Association
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GAPRCM	Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIJ	Ghana Institute of Journalism
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
GNI	Gross National Income
GOIL	Ghana Oil Company
IABC	International Association of Business Communicators
ICCO	International Communications Consultancy Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPR	Institute of Public Relations
IPRA	International Public Relations Association

IQPR	International Quality in Public Relations
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
OPR	Organisational-public relationships
PRAG	Public Relations Association of Ghana
PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
ROE	Return on equity
ROI	Return on investment
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WW I/II	World War 1 & 2

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	page
Figure 2.1. Inductive reasoning.....	72
Figure 2.2. Deductive reasoning	72
Figure 2.3. The cycle of research.....	73
Figure 4.1. The three Cs of data analysis: codes, categories, concepts.....	169
Figure 4.2. Relationship between questions, data, and meaning.....	170
Figure 5.1. Educational level of participants.....	180
Figure 6: Framework for effective public relations in the financial services sector	287

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Research objectives, methods of data collection, and chapter.....	11
Table 2.1.	Conceptualisation of the study	52
Table 2.2.	Frameworks for organisation-public relationship measurement.....	89
Table 3.1.	Stages of PR development in the United States of America.....	100
Table 3.2.	Characteristics of the four models of public relations.....	109
Table 3.3.	The four models of European public relations.....	113
Table 5.1.	Demographics of participants.....	178

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 21st century public relations (PR) has seen an immeasurable growth as an industry both in numbers and respect. As an industry and profession PR has matured to the point of becoming an essential part of businesses worldwide. Contemporary PR as it is known today has moved beyond being an industry based in the United States of America (USA) to a worldwide profession. PR practice now spans countries with diverse cultures, economic and political systems, and levels of development (Curtin & Gaither, 2012: 1; Culbertson, 1996:1). Gregory (2004: 1) describes the nature of PR as “Dynamic, fast-moving, always developing, at the heart of the action.” This is because a lot more organisations, including developing/non-western countries, are gradually becoming aware of how communication/PR impacts on the success of their organisation. Waiyachote (2007:1), for instance, attributes the rise of the PR industry to the profession’s ability to distribute messages clearly. Duncan (2005: 543) asserts that PR has “the power to cut through messages” and is more cost-effective and sometimes more credible than advertising. Bowen, Rawlins and Martin (2012: 3) further emphasise the value of PR to organisational success when they posit that PR can mean the difference between “life and death” or the difference between “profitability and failure.”

The increasing value of PR within organisations has primarily been due to economic, societal, and technological advancement and communication across the globe. Many businesses now transcend national borders to conduct businesses, leading to a competitive environment. The increase in competition for foreign market among multinational organisations means that PR practitioners now service not only their environment, but a new, intercultural, worldwide audience (Chmielecki, 2012: 135, Jourde, 2007:1). Grunig (1992: 541) points out that “most organisations are affected by publics throughout the world or by competition with organisations in other countries.” This means organisations can no longer depend on a single strategy to communicate with its publics but must rather develop different strategies to address different situations (Gregory, 2002).

As globalisation is continuously increasing economic, social and political interdependencies, many organisations are also interacting, physically and virtually, with their publics outside their own country to build a dynamic relationship. Molleda (2009) believes that “trade, direct foreign investment, political coalitions, worthy global cases, information flow, and social networking, among other phenomena, are increasing the complexity of these relationships dramatically.” What this means is that there is a higher level of interdependence and interconnectivity among groups and organisations. The net effect is that there is now a strong demand on PR practitioners to manage communication and relationships between an organisation and its stakeholders at local as well as international levels (Vercic, Zerfass & Wiesenbergr, 2015: 415; Wakefield, 2001: 639).

Scholars have, for several years, been studying how the profession is practiced globally as a way of contributing to the development of global theory and increasing the body of knowledge on the discipline. However, such research has largely been concentrated in western organisations/countries (Gupta & Bartlett, 2007:1; Cultberson, 1996:2). Very little research on the practice has been conducted in other parts of the world, especially in African countries. The purpose of this study is to investigate how PR is practiced in Ghana, with specific reference to corporate institutions in the financial sector. The desire to contribute to the body of knowledge on the practice and understand the uniqueness or otherwise of how the profession is practiced has occasioned this research. At the end of the research, the researcher hopes to develop a framework that will aid in the practice of PR in the financial services sector in Ghana.

This chapter will examine a number of issues. The chapter will discuss the overall context of the study, beginning with a discussion of the background, including an overview of the PR industry. Next, an overview is provided on the concept of globalisation and its impact on PR practice worldwide. Reference will be made to the different paradigms postulated by scholars in different regions particularly USA, Europe and Asia. Other issues that will be discussed in this chapter include: the purpose and relevance of the study, some theoretical concepts and related studies on the subject under investigation, historical overview of public relations, the research

setting, as well as the goals and objectives of the research. The chapter will conclude by looking at the formulation of the research problem(s), including the formulation of the sub-problems, various aspects of the methodology and the anticipated findings. The researcher will further link the contribution of the study to the discipline of communication.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

PR efforts are generally seen as an attempt to manage communication between an organisation and its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 6). Johnson and Zawawi (2009: 6) also define PR as “a management function that uses communications to facilitate relationships and understanding between an organisation and its publics.” The practice of PR is found globally by corporate organisations, NGOs and governments in different roles and contexts. Organisations use PR as a means of enhancing reputation and building and maintaining relationships to achieve goals and objectives. Mehta and Xavier (2009: 192) note that the duty of a PR practitioner is to ensure successful communication between an organisation and its publics, including monitoring and responding to issues, expectations and maintaining an effective working environment.

PR is an intrinsic part of every organisation. It provides organisations the opportunity to monitor, dialogue, and respond to issues that affect key publics of the organisation (Lamb & McKee, 2005: 1). Lamb and McKee (2005: 1) define the profession as “the communication and action on the part of an organisation that supports the development and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships between the organisation and the groups with which it is interdependent.”

The relevance of PR professionals to organisations is clearly found in the roles they play within the organisation. PR practitioners do not only manage information flow, they actively engage key publics, establish strong relationships, strive to maintain a sound reputation at all times and through all circumstances, and through PR measurement, help the organisation achieve strategic organisational goals (Public Relations Society of America – PRSA, 2012). PR practitioners ensure that organisations engage with stakeholders to succeed in an increasingly competitive, product-saturated, service-oriented marketplace. PR is now a fundamental part of

organisations in every country (McEllrath, Chen, Azarova & Shadrova, 2001: 665). The discussion so far shows how far the profession has developed during the new millennium and its importance to organisations not only in the western world but also other countries where the profession was not held in high esteem.

In the attempt to contribute to the discussion on increasing the global body of knowledge, it is important for scholars to look at how the profession is practiced in other countries. There is the need to broaden the discussion to other cultures, especially countries regarded as third world as these countries are poorly represented when debating scholarly literature on the subject. The need for country-by-country studies on the profession is even more urgent as the literature available is either scarce or non-existent. Despite showing signs of increasing development, very little is known about PR practice in Africa and Ghana, for that matter. In fact, Mersham, Skinner and Rensburg (2011: 1) note that most of the scholarly body of knowledge on PR since the beginning of the 21st century has mainly been in the USA and western Europe, a view shared by other scholars. The result is that conceptual frameworks/models developed to enhance the practice suit these countries. Mersham et al (2011: 1) therefore suggest the need for an African body of knowledge of PR and theory based on an African worldview. This will pave the way for Africa to effectively “engage in the global refocusing of world economics and discussions on how PR is practised in various countries and on different continents.” Gupta and Bartlet (2007: 1) also affirm that non-western practitioners often struggle in their attempt to implement such western-based models due to cultural, economic and societal differences. Although South Africa has led Africa’s effort to bridge the gap (Mersham, Skinner & Rensburg, 2011; Roux, 2010; Steyn, 2009; Van Heerden, 2004 etc), there is much more to be learnt by way of country-by-country studies. The current study therefore attempts to fill the gap by investigating how the profession is practiced in Ghana by first trying to understand the roles of practitioners in the selected organisations and the models that influence their practice. Secondly, the research will determine whether these models (if any) are effective in view of the cultural diversity between Ghana and the western countries where the models were developed.

The previous section introduced the chapter by discussing the various contexts within which PR is practiced. The following section will briefly discuss the country Ghana and its economy. It will end with a discussion about the financial services sector in Ghana.

1.2.1. Overview of Ghana

Ghana is a lower middle income country situated in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country is flanked by French speaking countries, Cote D'Ivoire to the east, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Ghana currently has a population of over 25.1 million (July 2013 estimate) with a GNI per capita (US\$) of 1,760 (World Bank Doing Business report, 2015). In 1957, Ghana became the first country south of the Sahara to gain its independence from their British colonial masters. The independence struggle was led by then Prime Minister Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who later became its first president. The name of the country, which was then known as the Gold Coast because of its abundance of gold, was changed to Ghana after independence to reflect its new identity. After a series of coups in the 1980s Ghana witnessed historic elections as the country took the decision to return to multi-party democracy with the promulgation of a new constitution in 1992. Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, the then military ruler, became the first president of the fourth republic under the 1992 constitution. Since then Ghana has successfully held several elections and the country continues to grow economically and politically.

The people of Ghana are made up of various ethnic groups with its own unique cultural characteristics and lifestyles. The major ethnic groups consist of the Akans (47.5%), who constitute the largest group in terms of population. The others are the Ga-Dagme (16.6%), Ewe (13.9%), Mole-Dagme (7.4%), Guan (3.7%), Gurma (5.7%), Grusi (2.5%), Mande (1.1%), and others (1.4%) - (Tucci, 2017).

Ghana is currently one of Africa's fastest growing economies thanks largely to its wealthy resources, democratic system and robust economy. The democratic credentials of the country have fast-tracked its growth in foreign direct investment (FDI) in recent years. Ghana's GDP is now close to US\$ 44 billion (2013 estimate – Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

1.2.1.1. The Economy

Ghana achieved middle income status in 2012 with a GDP per capita of US\$1,563 with a GDP estimate of US\$1,668 estimated for 2013 (*PwC*, 2014). Ghana is a country rich in natural resources. It is the second largest producer of cocoa and one of the leading producers of gold in the world. The quality of Ghana's cocoa ensures that it enjoys good patronage on the world market. Cocoa presently accounts for nearly 20% of the country's total merchandised exports. Apart from cocoa, the country also exports timber, crude oil, diamonds, bauxite, and aluminium, among others.

In 2010 Ghana commenced drilling of crude oil in commercial quantities and now produces close to 120,000 barrels per day. Production of oil is expected to increase after the government approved the commencement of production on the TEN (Tweneboa-Enyenra-Ntomme) oil field which is operated by Tullow Oil Ghana Ltd. Ghana commenced the export of natural gas in the latter part of 2014.

Ghana's growth has remained fairly resilient despite the global recession. Even though the growth rate has slowed since 2011, the economy remains robust and fairly stable. The GDP growth rate as at 2013 stood at 5.4%. The economic growth rate was buoyed by oil exports, which accounted for a much larger proportion of GDP growth (ISSER, 2014: 7). There was a significant improvement in the industrial sector, which is the second largest and second fastest growing sector, primarily due to growth in mining and quarrying, with petroleum the main contributor (ISSER, 2013).

1.2.1.2. The economic sector

The economy of Ghana is based on a number of sectors including agriculture, financial services (banks and other financial institutions), real estate, energy (electricity, oil and gas), mining, tourism and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). For the purpose of this research, the discussion will focus on the financial services sector. This sector is considered key due to its significant contribution to the country's economy.

1.2.1.3. Financial services sector

The financial sector's role in promoting economic development has been highlighted for decades (Armenta, 2007: 189). Sutton and Jenkins (2007: 6) also identify the fundamental role that the financial services sector plays in economic growth and development. Sutton and Jenkins posit that the financial services sector allows citizens to save money, protect themselves from an uncertain future, and enhance their credit value, at the same time ensuring they start and expand their businesses, enhance productivity, and compete effectively not only at a local level, but also internationally. Ghana's financial services sector operates in three main areas, namely the banking and finance (including non-banking services and forex bureaus), insurance, and financial market/capital markets. The industry is regulated by the Bank of Ghana. The financial services sector is estimated to have contributed 10% to overall growth rate of the service during the third quarter of 2013 (Ghana Banking Survey, 2014). The financial services sector in Ghana has become essential in the resource mobilisation as well as an integral part of Ghana's payment and settlement system. The sector assists start-up businesses and also enables existing businesses to expand their horizon. This process allows citizens to generate income, ultimately improving livelihoods. This also allows government to generate more revenue in terms of corporate tax which it uses to develop various aspects of the economy.

The previous section discussed Ghana, its economy and the financial services sector. The next session will outline the statement of the problem as well as the goals of the study.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The body of knowledge on the practice of PR has experienced tremendous growth since the latter part of the 20th century. Evidence shows that the field will continue to evolve itself into an established discipline (Wilcox, 2006: 68). However, a comprehensive review of the current scholarly body of knowledge on PR practices indicates that the conceptual literature of the developments and practice of PR is uneven. In the opinion of Sriramesh and Vercic (2009: xxxvi), the focus of theory building has been restricted predominantly to the USA and a few western European countries. Empirical evidence on the growth and practice of PR in different parts of the world, especially non-western regions such as Africa, is very limited (Ming-Yi & Baah-

Boakye, 2008: 2). The result is that empirical evidence about the practice of the profession in other parts of the world is very scarce. They advocate for a descriptive account of PR practice from individual countries to enhance the body of knowledge currently in existence, especially as PR is now a global enterprise.

In view of the on-going debate about the different theoretical underpinnings that influence the practice of PR globally (as discussed previously), the question one then asks is “what influences the practice of PR among corporate organisations in Ghana? Is there a model that is unique to Ghana as it is in other parts of the world such as the two-way symmetrical in North America, the reflective paradigm in Europe or the strategist model as practiced in South Africa?” In consideration of these questions and based on literature reviewed (such as Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2008), the researcher believes that there is a significant gap in as far as knowledge of how PR is practiced is concerned, especially in the corporate world. The problem to be addressed will therefore be based on the following: *To investigate how PR is practiced among corporate organisations in Ghana by executing a qualitative cross-sectional study of the financial services sector of the Ghanaian economy and developing a theoretical framework which will guide the practice of PR in the sector.*

The study will investigate how PR is practiced in relation to its roles (activities) and models (purpose). This has become even more imperative as there is little or no information on how PR is practiced in Ghana and the models used in such practice. Available literature shows that the roles of PR, and for that matter the theoretical basis of the practice, is fashioned from the western perspective, specifically the USA and United Kingdom (UK) (Sriramesh 2009: xxxii; Verčič, van Ruler, Bütschi & Flodin, 2001: 373). Freitag and Stokes (2009: 183) admit that the practice of PR in sub-Saharan Africa, of which Ghana is a part, does not follow the same format as that which is practiced in the western world. The authors again note that the few studies done on the practice in Sub-Saharan countries have been evaluated “unfairly” based on western standards, as noticed by Gupta and Bartlett in their 2007 analysis of the differences between Asian and Western approaches to business and PR. Grunig et al (1995: 164) also acknowledge that many of the conditions that allow professional PR to thrive in the USA may not even exist in organisations in other countries, hence the practice of PR may not be as effective in other countries as it is in the USA as they

may not rely on the same models. The overall aim of this study is to develop a framework that will guide the practice of PR in the financial services sector in Ghana.

1.4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of the study is applied communication research as it aims to investigate issues of a practical nature, that is, determining the practice of PR among corporate organisations in the financial services sector of Ghana. Bhattacharjee (2012: 3) describes the goal of a scientific research as one that aims to discover laws and suggests theories that help explain natural or social phenomena or build scientific knowledge. Du Plooy (2001: 48) defines research goals as aims, purposes and overall outcomes of a research. He however acknowledges the confusion among scholars regarding the use of and meaning of the concepts of 'goals', 'aims', 'purposes', 'objectives', or 'outcomes' of research. Du Plooy (2001: 48) distinguishes between two goals of research, namely "applied communication research" and "basic communication research." Du Plooy further states that a research study is regarded as basic when the aim is to develop theories that explain a particular communication phenomenon as a means of expanding communication as a science. On the other hand communication research is applied when the purpose is to investigate practical issues in order to 'find solutions to problems that can be applied.' A key aspect of applied communication research is that it allows a researcher to evaluate current practices of a phenomenon. Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 406) categorise research into three types, namely applied, basic and introspective. Applied research focuses on theory to solve "world problems." In other words, it is used to solve specific problems such as communication campaigns. Broom and Dozier (1990: 23) categorise applied research into strategic (used to develop PR campaigns) and evaluative research (assesses the effectiveness of a PR programme). Basic research on the other hand attempts to proffer a framework for the practice of PR. It aims at creating knowledge that cuts across PR situations (Dozier, 2010: 10-11). The introspective examines the field of PR including experiences among members of the profession.

The overall objective of this research is exploratory. Exploratory objectives enable a researcher to obtain new insight into an issue of interest. In this case it will allow the researcher to obtain insight into how PR is practiced among selected corporate organisations in Ghana. The aim of exploratory research (Sue & Ritter, 2012: 2) is to

formulate problems, clarify concepts, and form hypothesis. Bhattacharjee (2012: 6) notes that exploratory research is mostly investigated in new areas of inquiry with the purpose of determining the scale or extent of a particular concept, problem, or behaviour, and to develop some preliminary ideas about that concept. Nagy, Biber and Leavy (2011: 10) also describe exploratory research as an “investigation into an area that has been under-researched.” Du Plooy (2001: 48) views exploratory objectives as examining unknown research areas as a means of obtaining new insight into a communication problem. These definitions agree with the nature of this research which seeks to understand how PR is practiced in selected corporate organisations, a view shared by Babbie (2008: 97).

Kothari (2004:36) also explains that exploratory studies allow a researcher to gain insight into an issue and discover new ideas. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011: 10) put it succinctly by indicating that the purpose of exploratory research is to investigate an area that has been ‘under-researched’ hence such data gathered virtually helps shape the direction of future research. In view of these assertions the researcher considers exploratory research as the right method to use in investigating how PR is practiced among corporate organisations in the studied organisations. The next section will detail the research objectives and research questions.

1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the objectives of this study will be to:

- Investigate how PR is conceptualised and practiced by means of literature review.
- Determine how PR is conceptualised by practitioners in the financial services sector in Ghana.
- Analyse the views of Ghanaian PR practitioners in the financial services sector about the selected PR models.
- Analyse the PR roles (activities) practitioners in the financial services sector in Ghana are engaged in.

Table 1: Research objectives, goal of the study, methods of data collection, and chapter

	Goal of study	Research objectives	Research method(s)	Chapter
1	Applied communication			Chapter 1
2		To investigate how PR is conceptualised and practiced by means of literature review	Literature review	Chapter 1 to 4
3		To determine how PR is conceptualised by practitioners in the financial services sector in Ghana	Interview	Chapter 5
4		To analyse the views of Ghanaian PR practitioners in the financial services sector about the selected PR models	Interview	Chapter 5
5		To analyse the PR roles (activities) practitioners in the financial services sector in Ghana are engaged in.	Interview	Chapter 5

Source: Researcher's own compilation

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the research objectives, the study will seek answers to the following questions:

- How is PR conceptualised and practised according to literature?
- How is PR conceptualised by Ghanaian PR practitioners in the financial services sector?
- What are the views of Ghanaian PR practitioners in the financial services sector on the selected PR models?
- What roles (activities) do Ghanaian PR practitioners in the financial services sector perform?

The next section will discuss the PR industry in general including the concept of globalisation and its impact on the profession at a global level. It will also briefly discuss the various models practiced in different cultural settings.

1.7. THE PUBLIC RELATIONS INDUSTRY

The PR industry has experienced a great transformation over the last 30 years. The industry has moved from being mere publicity or one-way communication to become a means by which organisations and their stakeholders engage in a two-way dialogue aimed at creating a mutual understanding. PR, from its modern conception in the early part of the 20th century to the present time, has undoubtedly developed into a multi-billion dollar industry and the fibre of every successful business and democratic process. In economic terms, the World PR industry report (The Holmes Report and the International Communications Consultancy Organisation - ICCO¹) of May 2015 reveals that the industry grew by 7% in 2014 to more than \$12 billion in 2015. This was however a decrease from the 11% increase in 2013, a situation attributed to currency volatility. The fact however remains that the industry continues to outperform the growth of the global economy. In terms of the number of practitioners, the Global Alliance estimate the number of actual PR professionals in the region of three million (Wilcox & Cameron, 2012: 5). However, this figure could be higher as more people get into the profession annually.

In Africa, political stability and rapid socio-economic development has also accelerated the growth of the profession. Several countries on the African continent, including South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda have their own institution that supports the practice. Apart from this, Africa also has its umbrella body in the Federation of African Public Relations Association (FAPRA), which was established in 1975. These associations are making valuable contributions to the development of the practice. In Ghana, the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) constantly organises courses in various aspects of PR as a way of sharpening the skills of practitioners to come to terms with current practices. Practitioners on the continent are also making efforts to contribute to the global discussion on the practice through publications on the practice in Africa (Mersham & Skinner, 2009; Akpabio, 2009; Rensburg, 2007; Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2008; Van Heerden, 2005). Although not widely acknowledged due to the lack of literature, research on the practice has been growing during the last two decades (Akpabio, 2009). Mersham, Skinner and Ronsburg (2011: 3) believe that the growing nature of the practice also means that there is the need for

¹ The World PR Report was based on submissions from more than 400 public relations firms across the world.

African practitioners to build a body of knowledge of PR and theory based on African perspectives. Scanlan (2004: 5) is of the opinion that African countries are the originators of and the focus of intense PR efforts. This statement feeds into efforts by practitioners, including those outside the continent, to evaluate the practice of PR given the continent's diverse cultural and ethnic background. Although Freitag and Stokes (2009: 92) acknowledge the use of PR in many African countries as a tool for development or nation-building, they nevertheless believe that the profession is growing at a phenomenal rate.

1.8. GLOBALISATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Available literature suggests a strong linkage between globalisation and PR practice. Scholars believe that globalisation has opened enormous opportunities for the growth of PR practice and scholarship (Sriramesh, 2009: 2; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2007: 335). Indeed, Sriramesh and Verčič (2007: 335) argue that both globalisation and PR have played a mutual role in contributing to each other's growth while others such as Butterick (2011: 179) and Morley (2002: 192) describe PR as a global phenomenon permeating through cultures. This section will briefly review the concept of globalisation and then discuss its linkage with PR.

1.8.1. Brief overview of globalisation

Much has been discussed about the concept of globalisation and how it has encapsulated the political, economic, and cultural atmosphere of today. However, as some scholars have pointed out, the term is not new (Walker, 2010: 219). Sriramesh (2009: 2) for instance, argues that globalisation did take place at various points of human history as civilisations exchanged values and artefacts. L'Etang (2008: 232) also shows that globalisation began with "early human exploration and developed through trade, imperialism, diplomacy, tourism and cross-cultural exchange."

Globalisation has been defined in many ways to mean different things in various fields including international business, global public policy and international relations. It has been argued that the difficulty in settling for a single definition is primarily due to its multifaceted nature. In the words of Lee (2005: 14): "although globalisation is a truly multifaceted trend that makes it hard to define within one discipline, it obviously relates to the emergence of new social relations that transcend traditional borders." Diamond

(2006) links globalisation with the “growing interdependence and interconnectedness of the world - politically, militarily, economically and technologically.” Ritzer (2004: 72) also described it as “the world with diffusion of practice, expansion of relations across continents, organisation or social life on a global scale, and growth of a shared global consciousness.” L’Etang (2008: 231) describes the concept of globalisation as “compression of time and space that has been facilitated by communication technology and travel.” In simple terms, globalisation involves working with different employees, customers, vendors, communities and government officials in multiple countries (Wilcox & Cameron, 2011: 544). Sondzi (2006: 112) further describes the many dimensions of globalisation to include environmental, military, social and economic globalisation.

Globalisation is believed to have originated in the 1990s primarily due to the rapid increase in international trade to refer to the expansion of the world as an interconnection of economic, communications and social networks (Sriramesh, 2010: 692; Franklin, Hogan, Langley, Mosdell & Pill, 2009: 96). Globalisation was a term mooted to describe the idea of a ‘global village’, a term coined by Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s (Franklin et al 2009: 96). Sriramesh (2010: 692) notes that globalisation is primarily used in an economic sense to mean elimination of factors that inhibit effective trade among nations, thereby allowing for the smooth flow of goods, services, and labour with communication driving such exchange. Globalisation now shapes the way businesses, including small businesses, operate. Heath and Coombs (2012: 456), in affirming how globalisation has impacted on even small businesses, make the following comment:

Globalization, especially with the advantages of the Internet, has reshaped the way many small businesses can operate and has created challenges for large multinational organizations. Once, small businesses simply lacked the advertising and public relations budgets to reach markets around the world. The Internet, with its many search engine capabilities and specialized discussion groups and Weblogs, has brought these small companies and interested customers together. Search engines, discussion groups, and Weblogs create the “awareness” that cannot be accomplished with limited advertising

dollars. Faxes, the Internet, and the Web bring people closer together by speeding things up and making communication easier.

Thanks to globalisation, access to information has never been easier, especially with the continuous advancement of technology, specifically the Internet. Sriramesh (2009: 2) attributes the growth of globalisation to three principal factors, namely: (i) the elimination of trade barriers among nations of the world, causing countries to trade within, and among, trading blocs rather than as individual nations, (ii) the rapid development of ICT; and (iii) recognition among a majority of countries in the world of the need to address common issues such as environmental pollution, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and overpopulation. Franklin et al (2009: 95) also attributes the growth of globalisation to rapid change in the international communication landscape. It is obvious that globalisation has made the world a smaller place by bringing together individuals, groups and organisations. The happenings in one country can have a ripple effect on others/organisations elsewhere. However, what does this mean for the practice and advancement of PR as a profession? The next section addresses this.

1.8.2. Impact of globalisation on the public relations industry

There is a general agreement among PR scholars that globalisation has opened immense opportunities for the development of PR. L'Etang (as quoted by Chudinova, 2015: 171) offers insight into such opportunities. According to L'Etang, globalisation affects PR for several reasons including:

- Globalisation offers the opportunity to formulate new ideas and newly presented goods and services in various markets.
- Globalisation increases communication opportunities and challenges.
- Globalisation changes organisations, key players, the public, key issues and relationships.
- More and more organisations are being globalised and use international labour and markets.
- PR is closely related to capital (economic power) and its maintenance (searching for new markets and cheaper materials, markets and knowledge).

Sriramesh (2010: 693) also touches on the growth opportunities offered to the PR industry by globalisation. According to Sriramesh, companies, especially multinational

companies that have entered emerging markets such as Asia and Latin America, are now compelled to communicate with different stakeholders in different cultural settings. Organisations are now required to develop effective communications strategies not only to communicate with diverse publics but also maintain positive relationships with these publics. The advent of globalisation means that the need to ensure that businesses navigate cultural terrains has become even more imperative (Kent & Taylor, 2011: 50; Wakefield, 2008: 138; L'Etang 2008: 230; Yannas, 2006: 1). Gregory (2017: 172) note the need for practitioners who work for global organisations to be able to communicate across timelines, cultures, languages and different communication systems. Gregory further asserts that even the actions of local businesses have global implication. Taylor (2001: 629) agrees with the assertions made by Gregory. Sriramesh (2008: 409) acknowledges the role that globalisation has played in international PR by promoting cross-national communication, which every organisation needs.

On the business front, globalisation has opened new markets for multinational organisations to enter. The entries of these multinationals have impacted the way businesses run in these countries (Sriramesh, 2010: 698). Many western multinational organisations such as Coca-Cola, Tullow Oil, Goldfields and Unilever have moved into other countries, including developing countries like Ghana, and are using PR to build and maintain strong relationships. Moreover, top PR agencies such as Ogilvy, Weber Shandwick and Porter Novelli, have established offices all over the world (Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2009: 84) to meet the demands of local and multinational agencies that require their services in building and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships with their publics. PR practitioners are at the forefront of driving these communication activities to establish relationships that are acceptable within the culture of the society that the organisation finds itself in.

1.8.3. Implications for global theory building

The discussion on globalisation and its impact on the practice of PR across cultures has been a major study among scholars for decades. One area of concern commonly studied is whether PR can be practiced the same way in every country. The debate on whether the same theoretical concept can be applied to the practice of the profession everywhere has continued to this day. Despite the phenomenal growth of

the PR industry, research and writing about the profession across the world tend to be dominated by western models, suggesting a western bias in understanding the profession (Mersham, Skinner & Rensburg, 2011: 1; Fitch & Surma, 2006: 1; Botan, 1992: 149). Sriramesh (2004: 1) articulate that the PR 'body of knowledge' is "largely ethnocentric with the focus on theory building confined almost exclusively to the United States with input from a few western European countries." This situation is not lost on other critics who argue that the debate over a generic model of PR has been largely one-sided with a prejudice towards the application of models that are western oriented to non-western, particularly developing countries, often with serious challenges (Halff & Gregory, 2014; Mersham, Rensburg, & Skinner, 2011 & 1995; Gupta & Bartlett, 2007; Holtzhausen, Petersen & Tindall, 2002).

1.8.3.1. Different public relations models practiced in different regions

A key issue that makes the practice of PR even more complex is the fact that there are different perspectives of how the profession is practiced in different countries. The last two decades has witnessed PR scholarship putting forward theories which seek to look at PR practice from both the local and global perspectives. For example, while PR practice in Europe is based on the reflective paradigm, the Americans support the relational paradigm. The European dimension of PR puts emphasis on the initiation of relationships with stakeholders. Changes in behaviour by the organisation is therefore deemed as essential for building and maintaining positive relationships with key stakeholders (van Ruler, Verčič, Butschi & Flodin, 2004; Holmström, 2004; Benteke & Verčič, 2002). The focus of PR in Europe is geared towards social responsibility, legitimacy of operation, i.e. obtaining the appropriate licence, ethical behaviour, focusing on long-term impact, and not focusing so much on profit. In view of this, Europe prefers to use the term *reflective communication management* to PR, which is seen as a US-based term (Van Ruler, 2003: 2, Verčič et al 2001: 377-382). In the bled manifesto, Van Ruler and Verčič concluded on the practice of PR in Europe with the following statement:

Seen from this standpoint public relations is not just a phenomenon to be described and defined. It is first, a strategic process of viewing an organisation from an "outside" view. Its primary concerns are

organisation's inclusiveness and its preservation of the "license to operate". As marketing is viewing organization from a market view, public relations is viewing organization from a public view (meant as "public sphere"). We, therefore, like to broaden the relational and communicative approaches to public relations with or into a public or reflective approach of which the relational and communicative approaches of public relations can be seen as parts (p. 16).

PR in Europe was categorised as being reflective (being socially responsible), educational (where organisational members are taught to be responsible in their communicative behaviour), and operational (implementation of communication plans) (Van Ruler et al 2001: 172-173). In effect the reflective model of PR is seen as a broadening of the relational and communicative approaches to public relations practice.

The North American perspective, which is mainly from the USA, suggests that stakeholders are selected by organisations and then relationships are formed with them. It seeks a balance between public interest and organisational interest through a two-way symmetrical system (Ledingham, 2003: 181). Within that viewpoint, PR is described as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (Broom & Sha, 2012: 7). The focus of the American model is on using communication as a tool to build a two-way mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and its publics. Dutta and Kumar (2015: 269) quote Allen Center and Patrick Jackson's observation of the relational paradigm: "The proper term for the desired outcomes of public relations practice is public relationships. An organization with effective public relations will attain positive public relationships."

The relational paradigm attempts to define the function of PR within the organisation, explain the role communication plays within that function, and offer guidelines for determining how PR contributes to the bottom-line (Ledingham, 2003: 182) and is consistent with the belief that public relations activities ought to benefit both the publics and the organisations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Ledingham & Bruning, 2001).

Grunig, Grunig, Sriramesh, Lyra and Huang (1995), after comprehensive studies of PR practice in India, Taiwan and Greece, proposed two other patterns of PR in the Asian region - the *Cultural Interpreter* and *Personal Influence* models. The personal influence model was mainly used to cultivate good relationships with external bodies including government, media, political, social or activists' groups. The cultural interpreter model on the other hand is used by multinationals doing business in other countries. Grunig et al (1995: 183) also postulate that the model can work within a single environment with diverse groups. The cultural interpreter model allows global businesses to use citizens of the country as they understand the culture, customs, socioeconomic, legal and political systems of that society.

It is interesting to note that in all these scholarly discussions, Africa appears to be missing, thus begging the question of what the role of Africa has in the quest to develop a theory that reflects how PR is practiced globally. Most of the scholarly research on this issue has emanated from South Africa while the rest of Africa lags behind. Scholars in South Africa have variously explored the contribution of communication management to organisational success for over two decades. One of the significant contributions made was the distinction between 'strategic communication management' and 'communication management' taking place on different organisational levels (Steyn, 2007: 139-141). The result was a new paradigm which became known as the corporate communication 'strategist' role which is at the senior most/macro level of management. This role ensures that the corporate communication manager monitors the environment for relevant development while anticipating their possible effect on the policies and strategies of the organisation and consequences for the organisation's policies and strategies, especially when it comes to stakeholder relationships (De Beer, Steyn & Rensburg, and 2013: 304). The PR strategist engages in environmental scanning and applies the mission, vision and values of the organisation to fit the environment (Steyn, 2007: 139, 141; Steyn & Puth, 2000: 17). Steyn (2000a) conceptualised three roles of corporate communication, namely the strategist, manager and technician. However, in a comparative study conducted by Steyn and Butschi (2003), these roles were found to be 'theoretically similar' and 'practically identical' to three of the reflective paradigms of Europe - reflective, managerial and operational (De Beer, Steyn & Rensburg, 2013: 308).

Africa as a continent does not have any identifiable means of verifying the models that it operates with unlike in Europe and the USA. In fact, with the exception of South Africa, there is no known model developed to reflect the role of PR in any particular African country. Mersham, Skinner and Rensburg (2011: 1) advocated the need for an African body of knowledge of PR and theory which is based on an African worldview. However, the diverse and complex cultural, geo-political and socio-economic factors make this task a challenging one. Moreover, research on the practice of PR on the continent is, in the words of Mersham and Skinner, 'sparse and fragmented' (2009: 265). Literature on PR practice usually tends to look at the roles/functions and/or contributions of PR to organisations. However, Van Heerden (2004), in her master's dissertation on practice of PR in Africa, identified three main models - reflective/two-way symmetrical, two-way asymmetrical/symmetrical, and the public information/press agency which influences the practice of PR in Africa. In their research on 'Public relations in Ghana: work-related cultural values and public relations models,' Ming-Yi and Baah-Boakye (2009) also concluded that the practice of public relations in Ghana tends to be a mixture of the Asian and American models, i.e. the cultural interpreter and personal influence models/two-way asymmetrical/symmetrical models. The Asian model however appears to be the most dominant. Kiambi and Nadler (2012), in their pioneer study to explore PR models that inform how the profession is practiced in Kenya, also identified the personal influence model as the most dominant. This may not be surprising as, like Asia, activities in Africa are based on strong cultural factors, including the fact that communities are built on strong relationships and the concept of 'one family.'

Despite the different models practiced in different cultural settings, scholars James Grunig, Larissa Grunig and David Dozier (2002), based on a 15-year IABC sponsored research, developed what they called the excellence theory of PR which, they claimed, was applicable in every country regardless of cultural, economic or political differences. The next section briefly addresses this theory.

1.8.3.2. Towards a generic principle of public relations

The debate over the applicability of western-based, especially U.S., models of PR in a global context resulted in a series of attempts by scholars to develop a global public relations model in the 1990s. Even though there is a general agreement regarding the

importance of PR in creating dialogue-based relationships (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Taylor, 2000a; Wakefield, 1997), there is no clear model that shows how PR should be practiced internationally. Scholars within the field hypothesised that the practice is based on either a localised design, globalised design, or a mix of both to communicate with publics in different countries (Waiyachote, 2007; Grammer, 2000; Molleda, 2000; Wakefield, 2000a; Mahler, 1996; Botan, 1992). Numerous studies conducted internationally reveal different models being practiced in different countries (Jo & Kim, 2004; Holtzhausen, Peterson & Tindall, 2003; Huang, 2000; Rhee, 2002; Grunig et al 1995; Sriramesh, 1992). The first attempt towards a global PR model was by Verčič, Grunig and Grunig (1996) following on from the original Excellence study by James and Larissa Grunig (1992).

Based on the outcome of the Excellence study, which was commissioned by International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Verčič et al (1996) fused the characteristics of the Excellence theory into 10 generic principles and proposed a global PR theory, which they argued, can apply to every environment regardless of culture, while identifying six variables that can apply to individual countries (Chmielecki, 2012: 138). The Excellence principles were first applied in a research in Slovenia by Verčič et al (1996). Since then they have been applied in several jurisdictions (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2012; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009; Grammer, 2005; Lim, Goh & Sriramesh, 2005; Hung & Chen, 2004; Chen, 2004; Rhee, 2002; Wakefield, 2000). Interesting the only known application of this theory in Africa is by Eric Grammer in his 2005 Master's thesis "An exploration of the generic principles of public relations excellence in Australia, Italy, Mauritius, and Uganda." This shows the extent to which Africa has been involved in the discussion for a framework that truly captures how PR on the continent is practiced. In Ghana, the situation appears to be worse as there is a paucity of scholarly articles on the subject. This makes it difficult to know how the profession is practiced in the country despite the many local and international businesses being established daily. The Excellence Theory was given further solidity in the field of PR practice by the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication management with the creation of the Stockholm Accords in 2010. The Accords consisted of a set of principles which affirmed the need for PR to play a major role in governance and management (Grunig, 2011: 11). It must be pointed out though that the Excellence theory has received its fair share of criticisms, but this is

not the focus here. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 2. The section below will discuss literature on the profession including conceptualisation of PR, its history and theoretical underpinnings.

1.9. LITERATURE REVIEW

To gain an effective insight into how contemporary PR is practiced in organisations, it will be essential to investigate the practice from both the theoretical and roles (activities) perspectives. Literature from the global perspective will be explored with the aim of determining the current level of practice of PR.

1.9.1. An historical overview of public relations

To be able to understand current practices in the field of PR, it will be important to understand how the profession began. Butterick (2011: 7) argues for the importance of knowing the history of PR because it is used by practitioners to explain how PR is practiced and to produce theories. Broom and Sha (2012: 74) also state that understanding the history of the profession is essential to the professionalisation of the practice. It gives an insight into the beliefs and values that have shaped the profession as well as overall perception of PR by the public.

Practitioners and academicians both agree that PR, as it is known today, started in the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century in the USA and it was mostly used in politics. However, efforts to engage with others and influence public opinion existed long before then (Broom & Sha, 2012: 74; Wilcox & Cameron, 2012: 37; Seitel, 2007: 23). Broom and Sha (2012: 74) make the point that the difference between modern PR and ancient communication practice is the addition of the 'tools, degree of specialization, breadth of knowledge, and intensity of efforts.' Cutlip et al (2000: 103) map the use by American Revolutionaries during the War for independence. Recognition of the social impact of poor business and immoral business, struggling industries, and muckraking, resulted in the emergence of PR as a necessity for corporations (Bowen, Rawlins & Martin, 2012: 21). The turn of the century saw the setting up of a number of press agents who defended business interest against journalists digging for scandals as well as government regulation development. PR was aimed at supporting businesses, influencing public opinion and lobbying against

the increase of regulation of business by politicians (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 5; Heath, 2005: 32; Cutlip et al 2000: 103).

Ivy Lee, a journalist by profession who is regarded by many as the father of PR and is credited with many of the techniques and principles currently practiced by practitioners, indicated in his Declaration of Principles in 1906 about PR:

This is not a secret press bureau. All our work is done in the open. We aim to supply news. This is not an advertising agency..... In brief, our plan is, frankly and openly, on behalf of business concerns and public institutions, to supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which is of value and interest to the public to know about (Broom & Sha, 2013: 87).

Although Lee had a great impact regarding how PR ought to be practiced, it was Edward Bernays who actually redefined the profession through his attempts to introduce systems and science into PR, hence earning the name “father of modern public relations”. He gained recognition for his theories on PR, through books, teaching PR and public debate (Wilcox & Cameron, 2012: 47). Bernays’ books, including his first book *Crystallizing Public Opinion* which he wrote in 1923, were practitioner focused, case study based and backed by insight from the social sciences into how to control the public mind using persuasive techniques. His submissions and arguments on PR greatly influenced a number of practitioners who had gained expertise in propaganda during the war years and subsequently joined the profession (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 10).

Theorist such as James Grunig and Todd Hunt based three of their four models of PR on the different ways in which Barnum, Lee and Bernays practiced public relations (Butterick, 2011: 12).

In Africa, modern public relations is believed to be a relic of colonialism. PR is believed to have been introduced in Africa by the British colonialist in the 19 and early 20th century. Proto-public relations was used by the British colonial administration to disseminate government information. It was often used to support the formation of newspapers in British colonies in East and Southern Africa (Kiambi, 2014, Natifu 2014)

as it did in West Africa (Watson, 2014). Kiambi found evidence of a British colonial information methodology that allowed PR to be practiced in a sophisticated way (i.e. beyond the mere dissemination of information) and this may have been applied in other colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean in the early to mid-twentieth century (Watson, 2017: 6)

1.9.2. Defining public relations

The concept of modern PR dates back to the late 19th century and the early 20th century, although some scholars predate it back to earlier time (Wilcox, 2006: 68; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000: 102). Since the formal practice of the profession was determined, PR has gone through many definitions, often evolving alongside its changing roles and technological understanding.

The global nature of PR means that identifying a single meaning for the profession is very difficult. Scholars and practitioners do not seem to agree on a single definition of PR (Butterick, 2011: 6, Hutton, 2007: 45; Verčič et al 2001: 374). PR has been defined variously by both scholars and institutions over the years. Whereas the European view of PR is based on four key dimensions, namely, reflective, managerial, operational and educational (or what is known as the reflective paradigm), the American concepts of PR focuses on the relational approach, that is emphasis is placed on the two-way symmetrical model as a means of establishing mutually beneficial relationships (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2002: 14; Verčič et al 2001: 380). The authors therefore defined PR as a communication activity based on sound strategy to maintain mutually beneficial relationship. For the Institute of Public Relations (IPR, UK), PR is about “reputation - the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you” (Franklin et al 2009: 175). The use of reputation management is based on the belief that good reputation enhances credibility which leads to several benefits including higher sales and earnings, price premiums, higher stock price, better community relations, among others (Therkelsen, Fiebich, Groehler, Freeman, Piltingsrud & Hutton et al 2008). In 2012, the Public Relations Society of America came up with a new or modern definition of PR. The definition focuses on PR as a communication process that is strategic in nature and also places emphasis on mutually beneficial relationship.

Hutton (2007: 46) suggests that PR pioneer Ivy Lee, in his description of PR, focused on honesty, understanding, and compromise, to create a “proper adjustment of the

interrelations” of public and business rather than promoting a formal definition. Lee described himself as a provider of information as well as a lawyer representing his clients in the court of public opinion. Another pioneer of the history of PR, Edward Bernays, also included the notion of adjustment: “Public relations is the attempt, by information, persuasion and adjustment, to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or institutions.”

Harlow (1976), after scouring through over 472 different definitions coined between 1900 and 1976, came up with what he considered to be a definition that was all-inclusive. The first global definition of PR, as he called it, consisted of common elements found within the various definitions he sampled:

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organisation and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinions; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change; serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools. (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 4).

Grunig and Hunt (1984: 6) construct a simple definition by describing PR as “the management of communication between an organisation and its publics.” Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000: 6), three key scholars in the field, define PR as “the management function that established and maintains mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.” Here PR is seen as an essential part of management which gives it clout and credibility. Burson (2011), after reviewing a number of definitions, offers his own definition of the profession to mean “an applied social science that influences behaviour and policy, when communicated effectively, motivates an individual or group to a specific course of action by creating, changing or reinforcing opinions and attitudes.” Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, Toth and Van Leuven (2004: 4) also used the

concepts of 'leadership and management' to describe the profession. Johnston, Zawawi and Brand (2009: 7) add ethical dimensions to the definition of PR by defining it as the "development and management of ethical strategies using communication to build relationships with stakeholders or publics." These definitions are mainly from the American and western European perspectives. Freitage and Stokes (2009: 5) suggest that such definitions may not work in developing countries and countries going through a transitional period such as Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. This is also emphasised by Sriramesh and Verčič (2009: xxxiv) who link the definition of PR to globalisation by adding a cultural dimension to the practice. The authors believe that the practice of PR should reflect the cultural and political diversity that impact on its practice worldwide. L'etang (2008: 230) uses the term 'international communication' to mean the "over-arching field which includes intercultural and multicultural communication, diplomacy and development communication." Wilcox et al (2012: 532) also describe international PR as "planned and organized effort of a company, institution, or government to establish and build relationships with the publics of other nations."

Regardless of the debate on the actual definition of the profession, a cursory look at the various definitions shows that PR is about communication management aimed at building and maintaining good relationship and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. The debate has further been enhanced by new developments such as the increasing use of social media and new ways of engaging the publics.

The previous section discussed the varied definitions associated with PR. The next section discusses a brief historical overview of public relations as well as conceptualises PR by some theoretical underpinnings including the models and roles. This section will also discuss how the profession functions within the selected industries.

1.9.3. Towards a conceptualised theory of public relations

Austin and Pinkleton (2006: 271) believe that theories are essential in generalising about the way people think and behave and also assist in determining the most suitable goals and objectives of a communication programme. Although a number of theories have attempted to capture the practice of PR for the purpose of this research, two main theories namely the Excellence Theory and Systems Theory will be used. It is believed that these two theories will enable the researcher to adequately put the investigation into its proper perspective, that is, how corporate organisations utilise PR and the models used in these practices. These theories are considered fundamental to determining the practice of PR.

1.9.3.1. The Excellence Theory

The Excellence Theory is an essential and defining statement of what constitutes effective PR in an organisation. The theory was a result of a 15-year study by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (Grunig, 2008: 1620) to determine the features of what they called 'excellent communications' and of the organisations that engage in excellent PR. The theory discusses the how public relations contributes to organisational effectiveness, its organisation and management, environmental conditions within an organisation that makes the organisation more effective, and how organisations determine the monetary value of PR (Grunig, 2008: 1620). The Excellence Theory is an amalgamation of a number of theories including the four models of PR identified by Grunig and Hunt in their earlier studies, and is based around the Systems Theory (Waterman, 2012: 1). The Excellence Theory is regarded as an amalgamation of strategic management theories of PR into a greater whole and seeks to address the question: How, why and to what extent does communication contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives? Again they sought to answer what they called the excellent question: How must PR be practiced and the communication function organised for it to contribute most to organisational effectiveness? (Grunig, 1992: 5).

1.9.3.2. Systems Theory

One of the well-known theories that has been used in the field of PR is the systems theory, which was developed by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1986. The theory is premised on the belief that organisations consist of subsystems that depend on each other for survival. It sees organisations as having different but interconnected parts which adapt and adjust to changes in their environment, be it political, economic, or social (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman & Toth, 2012: 52; Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 27). Broom and Sha (2012: 151) define systems as consisting of various “interacting units which endure through time within an established boundary by responding and adjusting to change pressures from the environment to achieve and maintain goal states.”

The systems theory provides a context within which an organisation and its relationship with the environment are assessed. In the view of Mehta and Xavier, the purpose of an organisation is to create and achieve goals that will benefit both the organisation and the environment it operates in. Such goals can consist of growth in profits and sales, gaining investor confidence/support, improving employment ratio, creating new products, or a lower carbon footprint (2009: 194).

Within the systems theory PR is regarded as a boundary spanner whereby practitioners act as a link between the organisation and its environment. PR professionals provide important information to the organisation's stakeholders and interpret the environment to the organisation's decision makers, that is, by constantly providing information about the problems and opportunities in the environment and help the decision makers respond to such changes (Mehta & Xavier, 2009: 195).

1.9.3.3. Models of Public Relations Practice

PR models provide the means for identifying the central ideas that guide the practice and how these ideas relate to each other. Grunig et al (2002: 307) argue that before the 1970s there was no research conducted in the USA to explain the behaviours of PR practitioners. Scholars generally accepted the conduct of practitioners as the ideal way and tried to find means by which they could describe, evaluate, and improve the actions of practitioners in the name of PR. The last two decades has witnessed the influx of several models indicating how PR ought to be practiced globally. Some of

these include the European model of PR articulated by Van Ruler, Vercic, Butschi and Flodin (2001), the generic principles proposed by Vercic, Grunig, and Grunig (1996), mainly from the North American perspective, but which, as stated by the promoters of the model, had a global appeal, and the cultural interpreter and personal influence models (Grunig, Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang & Lyra, 1995: 164). However, the most dominant of these models is the four models of PR described by Grunig and Hunt. In 1984, Grunig and Hunt published a book *Managing Public Relations* in which they proposed four models of PR which describe the nature of modern public relations and how it is practiced.

The first model, which was based on the work of press agents and publicists (hence the name press agency) in the middle of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, is based on one-way communication. The main goal of practitioners who operated under this model was to get their organisation's name favourably mentioned in the media. It included the use of propaganda tactics - from a conventional press release to a range of publicity stunts and events - which were incomplete, selective, distorted and partially true (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman & Toth, 2012: 62; Butterick, 2011: 25; Grunig, 1984: 22).

The second model, known as the public information model, is an improvement of the press agency as its purpose is to tell the truth. The model is based on the work of Ivy Lee and the "public be informed" approach where information is sent out by an organisation (Butterick, 2011: 26). However, the public information model, like the press agency, is also one-way and does not consider the needs or attitudes of the stakeholders (Moffitt, 2003: 319; Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 22). Its aim is to persuade, and more importantly, it is based on an honest approach to communication (Butterick, 2011: 26).

The final two models proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1989) are the two-way asymmetrical model and the two-way symmetrical model. These two models show the essence of research as a means of understanding the organisation, the situation, the audience, and any other outside factors, and show the importance of feedback (Heath, 2005: 25; Moffitt, 2003: 319; Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 22). Even though both models are effective and found in excellent organisations, the two-way symmetrical model is highly

regarded as the most effective as it provides an avenue for dialogue with publics, which tends to result in long-term relationship building and maintenance. The two-way symmetrical model dwells on bargaining, negotiations, and strategies of conflict to ensure interdependent changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviours of both the organisation and its publics (Grunig, 1989:29).

The four models are used to describe the various approaches and methods used by practitioners, governments, organisations and activists in managing relationships with publics. L. Grunig and J. Grunig (1992: 286) state that the models are viewed as a set of values and patterns that describes the various approaches used by practitioners. However, Grunig et al (1995: 163) recognised that the models of PR may not apply in every culture. Grunig et al (1995: 164), in studying the practice of PR in other cultures, identified two new patterns of PR practice namely the 'personal influence model' and the 'cultural interpreter model.' They however argued that these are variations within the four known models. They asserted that regardless of the differences in cultures, PR practice in most countries contains elements of the two-way symmetrical model only they are applied differently, suggesting that the models are applicable in every region including a developing country like Ghana.

The next section will discuss the different public relations roles as well as PR practice in the financial services sector.

1.9.4. Public relations roles

PR 'roles' are defined to mean the day to day activities that practitioners perform. Broom (1986: 2) identifies the function of PR as "gathering, assimilating, interpreting and disseminating intelligence about the environment." Dozier and Grunig (1992: 395) clearly indicate that the concept of 'role' is key to understanding PR. Petersen, Holtzhausen and Tindall (2002:1) also point out the importance of examining PR roles in international settings so as to understand how the profession is practiced in a particular country.

Broom and Sha (2012: 31) quote Broom and Smith (1979) as originally conceptualising the practice of PR into four key roles, namely the communication technician, expert prescriber, communication facilitator, and problem solving facilitator. Dozier and Broom (1995: 3-26) later categorised it into two dominant roles:

the technician role - engages mainly in implementation of strategic decisions by management but not directly involved in decision making - and the manager role - plans and manages PR programmes, advises management, makes communication policy decisions and oversees their implementation. The role of the manager was also conceptualised into three types: expert prescriber, communication facilitator, and the problem solving facilitator (Moss & DeSanto, 2011: 16; Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 29). These roles are mainly viewed from the American perspective. Van Ruler, Vercic, Flodin and Bütschi (2001: 380) suggest that there are distinguishable differences in the way PR was practiced; the most overwhelming difference being the reflective role. The reflective role provides information on changing the expectations, standards and values of society as well as adapting organisational values and norms. The reflective PR role focuses on behaviours considered social accountability as a means of increasing its legitimacy in the eyes of society. Styen (2000: 65-108) conceptualised a third role of PR known as the strategist role, and empirically tested it in the South African context. Styen believes that many parallels can be drawn between the reflective role and the strategist role. He articulates that the most senior practitioner in an organisation usually takes the position of a strategist.

1.9.5. Public relations in the financial services sector

A review of literature shows that not much research has been done on how PR is practiced within the financial services sector worldwide. Most of the literature on PR in the financial services sector has centred mainly on the banking sector. PR plays an essential role in the financial services sector as it provides the opportunity for organisations to interact with their publics. Simply put, PR functions within service firms such as financial firms are perceived as relationship functions. A study by Sandin and Simolin (2006: 3) suggest that public relations is now an important branding tool in spite of the fact that it receives only a small portion of the overall marketing budget of most organisations. This assertion has been corroborated as evidenced by many other studies (Jiang, 2002: 14; Wall, 2001: 3). Jiang (2002: 14), in his study of how American and Chinese Banks apply websites as public relations tools in a culturally-evolving Chinese society, found that although the two-way symmetrical model is used by Chinese banks in their effort to use websites as a tool for building a relationship

with their publics, cultural influences however affect the use of the two-way symmetrical model specifically. Jiang asserts that Hofstede's individualism versus collectivism (1984), Confucianism, proposed by Huang (2000) and Chen (1996), as well as Sriramesh's personal influence model, play a significant role in how PR is practiced among Chinese banks as opposed to the symmetrical model practiced by American banks. Jiang concludes that in view of the similarities and differences among the websites of the banks studied, culture plays an essential role in how PR is practiced internationally.

Sandin and Simolin (2006: 59), in their study to understand how Swedish banks utilise PR in communicating with their publics, found that banks do not identify their activities as PR but nevertheless utilise it highly. The activities of these banks are primarily aimed at building and maintaining relationships. Most importantly PR is seen as crucial to the success of the organisations and is thus placed at the top management level. This conforms to Grunig's belief that PR should be part of strategic management. This section looked at the literature review. The next section will define key terms used in the study.

1.10. DEFINITION OF TERMS

This section defines the key concepts used in the study. They include management function, PR, organisations and framework.

Public Relations: Numerous attempts have been made to define the concept 'public relations'. It has been defined variously to include as part of management, involved in strategic planning, having ethical dimension, management of communication, and based on mutual and beneficial relationship between an organisation and its publics (Burson, 2012; Broom & Sha, 2012: 4; Johnston & Zawawi, 2009: 6; Grunig & Hunts, 1984: 6).

Public relations models: Models refer to the various theoretical concepts used in the practice of PR. A number of models such as Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of PR and the generic principles of Vercic, J. Grunig, and L. Grunig (1996), have been used extensively in the practice of the profession, however other models such as the

personal influence model and the cultural interpreter model have also been identified as affecting the practice of PR in countries other than the USA.

Organisations: Miller (2012: 60) describes organisations as consisting of complex open systems requiring interaction among component parts. Organisations are part of a social system made up of different groups of individuals and the duty of PR is to ensure the maintenance of relationships.

Culture: Hofstede defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another. Culture in this sense, includes systems of values; and values are among the building blocks of culture” (Hofstede, 1980: 21).

Management Function: PR is seen as part of strategic management which uses communication to build strategic relationships with key publics (Grunig et al 1995: 164). The concept of PR as a management role elevates it from the view of simply applying a number of communication techniques such as promotions, publicity or industrial journalism to competency functions such as counselling, internal and external communication, media relations, community relations as well as the four-step process function, that is, research, strategic planning, implementation, execution, and communication and evaluation (Accredited in Public Relations, APR).

Framework: The Cambridge Dictionary defines a framework as a set of rules, ideas or structure used in the planning of something. The framework for the financial services sector will consist of guidelines that can be used in the practice of excellent PR.

1.11. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Harwell (2011: 148) stresses on the importance of research design due to its ability to communicate information concerning essential aspects of the study. Creswell (2002: 3) describes three approaches to research design: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. The research design refers to the overall plan for connecting research problems to empirical research. It is regarded as the “blueprint” for gathering data that answers specific research questions or test hypotheses Bhattacharjee (2012: 35). In other words, a research design lays out the kind of data needed, methods to be used in collecting the data, and how all the processes will answer your research questions

(Richards & Morse, 2012: 74). As this research is exploratory in nature, the qualitative design is deemed appropriate. The choice of qualitative is further explained below.

The study will utilise the qualitative method to gather and analyse data. Qualitative research attempts to understand a phenomenon from the viewpoint of the population involved. Lindlof (1995: 5) makes the point that qualitative research allows a researcher to interview people as a means of understanding their views “on a scene, to retrieve experiences from the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain descriptions of events or scenes that are normally unavailable for observation, to foster trust, to understand a sensitive or intimate relationship, or to analyse certain kinds of discourse.” In the words of Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3):

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

A qualitative approach is considered necessary to investigate the topic in detail. Details provided by participants can be used in developing a comprehensive framework for the practice of PR. Another reason for the choice of qualitative research is based on the fact that the face-to-face interaction allows the researcher to draw meaning from participants' experiences. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011: 4) articulate that qualitative research allows researchers to draw out the social meanings that people attach to their experiences, circumstances and situation. Mack, Woodsong, McQueen, Guest and Namey (2005: 14) also assert that using a qualitative strategy in exploratory research allows the researcher to probe the mind of the participants using open-ended questions. The researcher can glean responses that are meaningful and have cultural significance, not anticipated and rich and descriptive in nature. Also, the purpose of PR is to build and maintain relationships, and this makes PR an activity

whose value depends on quality. Thus, a qualitative approach seems a very appropriate way of investigating how it is carried out.

1.11.1. The research method

The research method consist of the various techniques/methods used for the conduct of a research (Kothari, 2004: 7). Adams, Khan, Raeside and White (2007: 25), in distinguishing the difference between research methodology and research method, argue that research method deals with how a research is conducted and implemented whereas research methodology describes the “science and philosophy behind all research.” Research methodology is viewed as the broad category under which research method falls. Research method therefore deals specifically with the analytical tools of research.

Due to the broad nature of the research, it will be divided into two main phases. The first will be a review of all relevant literature on the subject. This will include an analysis of the historical development of the subject as well as a review of theoretical foundations and a number of studies conducted on the subject. Information will be gathered from available documents on how PR is practiced in organisations in the selected sectors, journals, books, research publications, relevant websites and other research publications.

The second will be the empirical study which will consist of a qualitative study. In-depth interviews will be conducted with a number of PR specialists in the sectors studied. The study will use a semi-structured interview guide to collect in-depth information.

1.11.2. Population

Population of a study refers to the complete set of individuals that a researcher is interested in (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009: 128). It constitutes the overall collection of all units of analysis that the researcher wishes to make specific inferences (Johnson & Christensen, 2008: 224). Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 87) describe a population as a “group or class of subjects, variables, concepts or phenomena.” The target population for this study will consist of public relations practitioners from the financial services sector in Ghana.

1.11.2.1. Accessible population

Accessible population refers to the portion of the population who are accessible to be selected as participants for the study. A sample from the study is taken from this group (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012: 138). The accessible population can be regarded as the subset of the target population (Rovai, Baker & Ponton, 2014: 35). Since the study will focus on the financial sector, it will be easy to narrow down the target population. A list of the accredited financial institutions will be obtained from the website of organisations such as the country's central bank, the Bank of Ghana, and the Ghana Investment Promotion Center. These institutions usually have updated information on all organisations concerned. Once the targeted organisations are identified, the researcher will then contact the practitioners either by telephone or make personal contact to make an arrangement to undertake the research. The population parameter will consist of practitioners who work in the financial services sector. Du Plooy (2001: 100) defines a population parameter as dealing with the nature, size and unique characteristics of the population. Johnson and Christensen (2012: 218) also consider it to mean the numerical characteristics of a population; a definition corroborated by Lee (2008: 592). The unit of analysis will however be the individual PR practitioners who will be selected for the interview. The unit of analysis refers to a different aspect of a research's content, that is, the element that is counted (Austin & Pinkleton, 2008: 186; Dozier, 2011:121). Babbie (2010: 98) concurs by describing the unit of analysis as the "what or whom is being studied." In his view, a typical unit of analysis refers to the individuals within a group, especially where the researcher is interested in exploring the behaviour of different groups of individuals. Since this researcher is interested in interviewing individual PR practitioners, these will constitute the units of analysis for the research.

1.11.3. Sampling design

The term 'sampling' refers to the scientific process of selecting respondents from a population of interest (Babbie, 2008: 200). The process of sampling allows a researcher to use a small portion of a population to draw relevant conclusion about the entire population (Austin & Pinkleton, 2008: 98).

Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 87) describe a sample as a 'subset of the population'. Hogan, Langley, Mosdell and Phill (2009: 206-9) indicate that the practical limitations

of a research project makes it almost impossible for a research to be conducted on every member of a population. Researchers are therefore allowed to carefully take a sample from the population to investigate.

Sampling design can be grouped into two main categories, probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling ensures that every unit of the population has an equal chance of participating in a research. This allows for generalisation to be done (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 65; Babbie, 2008: 188; Heath, 2005: 793). Probability sampling is primarily used in quantitative studies and uses a relatively large sample size. It aims at achieving generalisation (Teddlie & Yu, 2007: 77).

Non-probability sampling on the other hand selects participants with a specific purpose in mind. Adler and Clark (2011: 103) note that non-probability sampling does not allow every member of the population an equal chance of being selected. Non-probability sampling, also sometimes referred to as purposive sampling, involves selecting particular units or cases “based on specific purpose rather than randomness” (Teddlie & Yu, 2007: 80). For the purpose of this research, the non-probability sampling procedure will be used to select participants within the selected organisations. Since the research will purposively target PR practitioners within selected corporate organisations, using non-probability sampling will be appropriate. Using non-probability sampling will also allow participants with the pre-established criteria to be selected.

Although non-probability sampling is sometimes viewed as an inferior alternative to probability due to its non-random nature, it is still appropriate for a study such as this. Non-probability sampling may not involve and/or represent a larger population, but it still uses scientific techniques in selecting its units or cases. That is to say, participants are not selected arbitrarily or without any specific purpose in mind (Blackwell, 2012). Non-probability research is mostly qualitative in nature where the researcher looks for in-depth understanding rather than more general understanding. Blackwell (2012) also notes that researchers interested in contributing to social theories whether by expansion or modification can use non-probability sampling procedure techniques. Non-probability sampling is also useful for exploratory research. Using non-probability sampling will therefore enable better investigation of the phenomenon.

Crouch and McKenzie (2006: 485) note that since non-probability sampling (such as interviews) allow the researcher to go beyond the normal set of questions through the development of fruitful relationships, a sample size less than 20 is enough to improve the validity of an in-depth inquiry in a natural environment. Considering this, it is believed that using 22 participants for the research will be appropriate to gather a wealth of information. However more research participants would be involved if the saturation point is not reached. Based on their research, Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006: 59) found that saturation mostly occurred during the first twelve (12) interviews even though elements of saturation appeared as early as the sixth interview. Bertaux (in Guest et al 2006: 61) therefore suggested 15 as the smallest acceptable sample size for all qualitative research. Mason (2010: 1-2) asserts that the intensive nature of qualitative research means that analysing a large amount of data can be time consuming and impractical. He asserts that qualitative data must be large enough to ensure all important perceptions are uncovered but small enough to avoid repetitiveness. Following the principles of qualitative research strictly should lead on to the point of saturation, that is, where the collection of new data does not lead to any new information.

The basic principle that underpins sampling is that it takes on a representative form, that is, the result of a study on a sample must be generalisable to the entire population. This principle applies to both qualitative and quantitative methods. However, unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not have statistic representation as its goal and does not follow a rigid formula (Coyne, 1997: 623).

Although the sample size of a qualitative research is usually small, some researchers (Patton & Cochran, 2002: 9) believe that one can continue interviewing respondents until the researcher reaches the point of 'saturation', that is, nothing new comes from the data during analysis.

1.11.4. Study area

The study area will be in the greater Accra region, the capital of Ghana. This particular region was selected because it serves as the host of the head offices of the various organisations in the financial sector. Again the practitioners mostly work from the head offices.

1.11.5. Data collection method

Data collection methods refer to the tools used in gathering information on a subject of interest. Data collection techniques allow the researcher to learn about a phenomenon by gathering information from individuals, groups, and text in any medium (Biber et al 2011: 5). Approaches to data collection in qualitative research usually consist of interacting directly with participants either on a face-to-face level or in a group setting. Qualitative methods of data collection allow the researcher to gather rich information and also gain a deeper insight into the topic under investigation. Data can be collected by observation, through personal interviews or in a group setting (Kothari, 2004: 98). The researcher intends to employ the personal interview technique to collect data from the research participants.

The data collection technique section will provide detailed discussion on the personal interview technique.

1.11.5.1. Data collection techniques

The researcher will use the interviewing technique to gather data from research participants. Interviewing involves a process of communication between a researcher and a respondent. It is a 'conversation with a purpose' whereby the interviewer adopts a plan of action consisting of areas of conversation, direction of the interaction and a set of questions which are not necessarily followed in any particular order (Babbie, 2008: 335). Interviews can be conducted over the telephone, via email or in person. For the purpose of this research the semi-structured interview will be used (See *Addendum A*: p. 337). The semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to use an interview guide with specific questions but not necessarily in the same order and is also able to probe for further information (Heath, 2005: 446). Interviews will be held with PR practitioners in the organisations studied to determine their conceptualisation of the PR role and models and how these affect the practice of PR.

1.11.6. Data analysis method

Data analysis involves the application of statistical and/or logical methods to define and explain, summarise, and evaluate given data. Shammoo and Resnik (2009: 46) contend that modern science allows researchers to use various analytical techniques to draw "inductive inferences from data and distinguish any real phenomena or effects

from random fluctuations present in the data.” Data analysis usually consists of cleaning and organising the data, describing, and testing hypothesis. However, this is mainly from a quantitative perspective. There are fundamental differences between quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis some of which include the following: qualitative data tends to focus on meaning rather than quantification, entails collecting in-depth information by using a small sample rather than a small amount of data using a large sample size, and is sensitive to context rather than trying to generalise (Adams, Khan, Raeside & White, 2012: 235).

In analysing qualitative data the researcher can use either the traditional text analysis - manually placing pieces of data into various categories - or computerised text analysis - the use of a computer software programme in analysing data by creating, applying, and refining categories (Adams et al 2007: 350).

Data collected from the field will be analysed using a computer assisted software programme, that is, computer text analysis. Even though the traditional text analysis has its benefits, such as its availability, human interpretation of data, and ability to find words not in the English Dictionary, Bright and O'Connor (2007: 1-2) believe that it is limited in the sense that coders tend to “read between the lines” when coding data. This means that such coding gives room for making individual inferences from their reading of the document. This has the tendency of skewing a result. Apart from this, the researcher needs a number of people as well as time to properly code the data, a process which is slow and time consuming. Using computerised text analysis on the other hand ensures “speed, rigour, team research, and generalisability.” This allows the computer to draw out common themes within the shortest possible time (Seal, 2005: 188). Although there may be possible challenges regarding wrong coding based on sentence structure and missing essential categories and patterns, it is nevertheless regarded as the best technique for managing data as it also ensures human error and researcher bias is greatly reduced. Moreover, Adams et al (2007: 350) articulate that the steps involved in computer text analysis are similar to the traditional text analysis (analysing notes, documents or interview transcripts including preparation, coding, analysis, and reporting). They also indicate that in a situation where the number of interviews is more than 40, computer text analysis can be used. There are a number of computer text analysis software programmes. The researcher will however use the Atlas.ti, a computer-based programme for analysing qualitative research. It allows one

to store, segment and organise field notes that are extensive. It also enables the researcher to find themes/patterns in the field notes.

1.11.7. Data interpretation

Brewer (2003: 164) describes data interpretation as ascribing meaning to data. He articulates that:

Interpretation is a creative enterprise that depends on the insight and imagination of the researcher, regardless of whether he/she is a qualitative analyst working closely with rich in-depth interview transcripts or 'thick description' based upon intense observation¹ or, at the other extreme, a quantitative researcher carrying out a complex multivariate statistical analysis of a massive dataset. In both instances, interpretation, the way in which the researcher attaches meaning to the data, is not mechanical but requires skill, imagination and creativity.

Brewer categorises interpretation in qualitative research into two, namely that which is generated by the researcher/analyst, and the interpretation given by the participants, and argues that none should be ignored when interpreting data, especially in a qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (2011: 219) are of the opinion that effective interpretation of qualitative data ensures some level of significance and consistency in the themes, patterns, and categories. Patton (2002: 480) also describes interpretation as "attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order."

The data will be categorised into sections based on the research objectives. This will allow for patterns and themes to be drawn from the data. This conforms to what Flick (2009: 218) identifies as the two basic strategies used in working with text; coding the material so as to categorise them/or develop theory (known as Grounded Theory), and the sequential analysis of the text which tries to reconstruct the structure of a text.

1.12. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The essence of every research is to inform an action. The significance of the study makes it worth investigating as it seeks to answer the following questions: Why is the study important? To whom is the study important? And what benefit(s) will the study have on the community? (Thomas, 2006: 151).

PR has become a global business and scholars, especially those from western/developed countries, are contributing immensely to the practice of the profession. The findings of this research can make a valuable contribution by adding to the existing body of global literature on PR practice. The global discussion on the practice of PR focuses mostly on the western world (Domm, 2013). Africa is often left out when it comes to the development of conceptual models for how the profession is practiced on the continent. This is reflected in the comment of Sriramesh and Verčič (2003: xxv) when they acknowledge that despite the body of knowledge in PR increasing and continuously evolving into a strong discipline, growth of knowledge has been largely focused in the USA and some western European countries. The result is that knowledge of how PR is practiced and the conceptual models that underpin such practice is limited. It is essential that developing countries also engage in these discussions from the African perspective. However, it appears contributions from countries in Africa, including Ghana, are severely limited. A cursory look at literature on contributions to the discussion on PR in Africa has mainly come from South Africa. This study will therefore provide information on a broad understanding of the study of PR in Ghana. Empirical data gathered will contribute to the global discussion of the field and expose Africa and Ghana for that matter, to the world of PR.

At the end of the research insight would have been gained into how PR is practiced among organisations in the financial services sector in Ghana, especially in relation to their functions and the models used in the practice. The result will establish whether PR practice in Ghana is based on western models or other models. This will allow for the development of an appropriate framework for PR practice for the sectors studied. Moreover, the research is essential to the development of the PR profession globally as well as public relations education locally.

1.13. FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY

It is believed that since the head offices of the selected organisations are based in the capital, Accra, contacting the accessible population will not be a problem. However the researcher anticipates that participants may delay in agreeing to be interviewed which will likely delay the data collection process. This should however not pose a serious challenge in the effort to gather data.

1.14. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Qualitative research has been noted for its subjectivity due to its sense of personal interpretation. This leads to loss of consistency of measurement and results. It is therefore important to ensure reliability and validity if qualitative research is to retain some form of credibility (Roux, 2010: 171). Joppe (2000) defines reliability as “the extent to which results are consistent over time, and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability. If the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.” Joppe defines validity as that which “determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. Consequently, does the research instrument allow you to hit ‘the bull’s eye’ of your research object?”

Validity and reliability are conventionally used for evaluating the quality of a research. Although validity and reliability are purely used for quantitative measurement, some scholars (Silverman, 2001; Hammersley, 1998; Maxwell, 1996; Kvale, 1996) argue that it can also be used for qualitative analysis. They argue that the testing of any good qualitative study is its quality. In the words of Hoepfl (1997: 48), a good qualitative study can “help us understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing.” Stenbacka also believes that the purpose of reliability in quantitative research is about “explaining” while the main purpose of reliability in qualitative research is “generating understanding” (2001: 551). Cho and Trent (2006: 320) also stress the need for qualitative researchers to be concerned about validity and reliability in the process of “designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study.” Although the ability of a qualitative study to use reliability has been questioned by a number of researchers (Simon, 2011: 154), due to its inability to demonstrate generalisability, scholars have also developed what they describe as criteria for

determining the quality of qualitative research. Seal (1999: 472) is an advocate for the examination of trust in determining the quality of a qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (Daymon & Holloway, 2002: 92) emphasise authenticity and trustworthiness - determined by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability - while Denzin (1978) proposed triangulation, i.e. "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study." To address the issue of validity and reliability, the study will employ Lincoln and Guba's construct of trustworthiness which focuses on credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as a means of ensuring rigour in qualitative inquiry.

Lincoln and Guba, in their seminal works in the 1980s, replaced the concept of reliability and validity with the concept of "trustworthiness". Lincoln and Guba (1981) argue that while all research ought to have "truth value", "applicability", "consistency", and "neutrality" in order to be regarded as meaningful, the way knowledge is developed within the quantitative paradigm is different from that of the qualitative (naturalistic) paradigm. What this means is that the two paradigms do not approach inquiry the same way and therefore criteria for assessing trustworthiness should be different. They therefore proposed different criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research:

- i. Credibility - confidence in the 'truth' of the findings.
- ii. Transferability - the extent to which findings of a research in one setting can be applied or transferred to another setting.
- iii. Dependability - showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.
- iv. Confirmability - a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

Within these techniques are a series of strategies that can be used to demonstrate rigour. These include prolonged engagement, triangulation, thick description, audit trail, reflexivity, member-checking in the process of coding, categorising, confirming results with participants, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, inquiry audit and referential adequacy.

Although the evaluative criteria have been criticised by positivists, it continues to be the reference point for measuring qualitative research.

1.15. ANTICIPATED FINDINGS

The outcome of the research will enable the researcher to know how PR is practiced among corporate organisations in Ghana especially in relation to their functions (roles) and the models used in the practice of the profession. By the end of the research, there should be an indication as to whether Ghanaian PR practitioners follow the western model of practice or other models are used based on certain factors such as culture. Knowledge and understanding of the practice of PR in Ghana is fundamental to the development of PR education and growth as information gathered will contribute broadly to the global discussion of the profession from an African perspective. As Sriramesh (2008:421) noted, models of public relations can be regarded as globally acceptable only when there is empirical evidence from other cultures. Evidence reviewed shows practitioners using western based models in different cultural settings are likely to face problems in the management of communication activities in their organisations. This research will provide insight into PR practice from the perspective of an African country with a unique and different cultural environment, especially in the light of globalisation. This study will also contribute to the discussion towards the development of an African body of knowledge and theory based on African philosophy and culture.

1.16. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethics simply refers to the moral principles or values that govern the actions of a researcher, that is, it deals with what is right and wrong (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 65; Babbie, 2008: 66). The notion of ethics, especially in qualitative research, has been discussed at length by researchers. Questions about ethical issues in research have assumed a very important dimension in recent times. Issues of ethics are regarded as essential to the research process from its inception stage to the publication of findings (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011: 59). An important ethical element is informed consent, which deals with ensuring that the subjects under investigation are notified about the nature of the research project and permission sought prior to their participation in the

study. This is usually done through a letter which details all that the respondents need to know in order to make up his or her mind. This protects the individual from harm and protects the researcher from being sued or having his or her research considered invalid or unethical. To address this, a letter will be sent to the various respondents spelling out the nature of the research and seeking their consent to interview them.

Regarding confidentiality, respondents will be assured that information given by them will be used strictly for academic purposes. Also, their names will not be used in any written document concerning the project and interview materials will not be exposed to any third party. This is in line with the views of Babbie (2010: 67) who believes that confidentiality is assured when the researcher identifies a person's responses but promises not to do so publicly. The study will also work with the ethical guidelines of the University of South Africa (UNISA 2016 – *Refer to Addendum E for Unisa's research policy on ethics in relation to the research*, p. 349). It will comply with the code of conduct of the university. Sources consulted and used in this research will be duly acknowledged.

1.17. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of a research deals with the parameters under which a research study operates, that is, the problem to be studied within a certain boundary/domain (Simon & Goes, 2011: 286). The parameters of this research are reflected in the research objectives, formulated questions, the target population, and the conceptual framework that focusses on the practice of public relations within the financial services sector. This study will involve samples of selected corporate organisations within the financial services sector in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. This study takes cognisance of the fact that the head offices of the selected organisations are based in the national capital.

Limitations of a research are issues that arise in a study that the researcher has no control over. Such matters limit how far a study can go and can sometimes affect the overall outcome of the result (Simon & Goes, 2011: 286). Since the study involves practitioners from only one sector of the economy, the result might not necessarily be enough to generalise to practitioners in other parts of the country. Another limitation is that since the research used the qualitative approach, the findings cannot be extended to a wider population in the same manner that a quantitative approach can.

Due to the exhaustive and labour-intensive nature of a qualitative research, only a limited number of samples can be utilised, and this cannot be statistically tested for significance. The current study was however, not meant to be generalised but to explore meaning and gain insight into a phenomenon rarely studied in Ghana (see chapter 4 section 4.2.1 for detailed discussion). Again, getting the approval letters from the organisations took longer than expected as some of the organisations were reluctant to give their approval. This affected the length of time it took to conduct the interviews.

In using exploratory study, the researcher is wary of the fact that such research is subject to bias and subjectivity. The researcher therefore engaged in saturation, constant comparisons with similar research as well as core strategies to ensure validity and reliability as suggested by Hammersley (in Daymon & Holloway, 2011:83-84).

1.18. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Overall the focus of the study is on exploring and describing the practice of PR in the financial services sector in Ghana through theoretical and empirical literature. Specifically, the study will focus on determining how PR is practiced within the financial services sector. This means that only practitioners working within this sector will be sampled for the study. The study will address the following issues: conceptualisation of PR by practitioners, views of practitioners about selected PR models, and analysis of the roles (activities) practitioners engage in. Although PR practice is found in every sector, this study focuses on the financial services sector because of the reputational and credibility issues the sector has faced (and is still facing) as a result of major scandals within the last half a decade.

1.19. ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The study will be divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter One: Background and Orientation

This chapter includes the general background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, an overview of the PR industry and the impact of globalisation, and a brief background on theoretical arguments, limitations and delimitation.

Chapter Two: Worldviews, paradigms and theories of the study

This chapter will review the various models that underpin PR practice. The chapter will also discuss the selected sector in relation to the research.

Chapter Three: Development and practice of public relations

This chapter will focus on the historical development of public relations. It will discuss PR development from three perspectives. First it will look at the western perspective (North America and Europe) and then focus on PR practice and end with the development of the practice in Africa and finally Ghana.

Chapter Four: Research design and methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology that will be adopted by the study. This includes the research design, the study area, population, sampling procedure and sample size, data collection instruments, and procedures of data analysis.

Chapter Five: Presentation and discussion of research result

Chapter six will present the findings from the study in an attempt to answer the research questions. The results will be presented and discussed in a way as to provide nuances with necessary interpretation to make the data and findings meaningful.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and recommendaton

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations and implications of the study for the field. The recommendations will include the proposed framework for PR practice in the financial services sector. Finally, the chapter will propose further research opportunities for future studies.

1.20. SUMMARY

The chapter examined various aspects of the study including the problem setting, objectives and the general research questions. It also discussed the problem statement, globalisation and PR practice. The significance of the study and the limitations/delimitations were also discussed.

The chapter first discussed the nature of PR, especially since the 21st century. The discussion was mainly based on the growth of PR worldwide and the contributing factors to the profession's growth as well as the value of PR to achieving business/organisational objectives. The chapter also discussed the need for an expansion in the scholarly research on how PR is practiced across cultures due to a gap in literature. This will increase knowledge in the body of literature on the subject of PR and how it is practiced.

A brief profile of the country of Ghana, including its geographical, political and economic characteristics, has also been discussed. Emphasis was placed on the Ghanaian economy and some of the essential sectors that holds the economy. This was followed by the purpose of the study where the reason for the current attempt to undertake this research was discussed. It briefly discussed the paucity of research in PR practice in Ghana and the subsequent effect on discussions about the overall nature of the practice in developing countries such as Ghana.

An overview of the PR industry worldwide was also discussed. This discussion centred on the financial worth of the PR industry, the factors that affected the profession's growth, the concept of globalisation and how it has affected the expansion and growth of the profession, and what it means for global theory building. A significant portion of the chapter was devoted to the different PR paradigms propounded by scholars in the attempt to project a common framework for the practice of public relations. The reflective model of Europe, the relational model of America and Asian models of cultural interpreter and personal influence were discussed at length.

The literature review examined the various definitions of PR from its beginning to the present, the profession's history and some of the theories that underpin the practice. The theories include the Systems Theory, the Excellence Theory and the four models of PR practice. The roles of PR as identified by Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) were also examined. The literature concluded with a brief discussion on PR practice within the financial sector.

The goals and objectives underlining the research were discussed. This was followed by the problem statement which examined the issue to be investigated. The specific research objectives and research questions were further developed with the

importance of the study also being discussed. Key terms used in the research were defined, including concepts such as public relations, models, culture, organisation etc.

The methodology consisted of a discussion on the means by which data will be collected. There was a discussion on the various areas of research design - qualitative, quantitative and mixed mode - with a particular focus on the qualitative. The overall methodological approach examined the population, sampling design, sampling method, study area, data collection method/techniques and data analysis method as well as interpretation. The issue of validity and reliability was examined as well as anticipated findings and how the study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject. The chapter concluded by discussing the limitations and delimitations of the work as well as how the work will be organised.

CHAPTER TWO

WORLDVIEWS, PARADIGMS AND THEORIES OF THE STUDY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this study is to investigate the practice of public relations (PR) among selected corporate organisations in Ghana with a focus on the financial services sector. The overall goal is to develop a conceptual framework that will guide the practice of PR in the sector. To this end, the previous chapter examined the problem setting, goals and objectives of the research, the statement of the problem as well as the concept of globalisation and its impact on the practice of PR. The chapter also discussed the significance of the study, limitation/delimitation as well as a brief history of Ghana and an overview of the PR industry in Africa and Ghana.

This chapter focuses mainly on the various theoretical concepts that underpin the practice of PR. The chapter is based on the first research objective which states “*to investigate how public relations is conceptualised and practiced by means of literature review.*” This will consist of a discussion on the existing models and how they have shaped the practice of PR. The chapter will first provide an analysis of the various worldviews and paradigms relating to PR practice, and this will be followed by a discussion on the selected theoretical statements namely, the Excellence Study, the Systems Theory, and the Relationship Management Theory. It will conclude with a brief discussion of PR practice in the selected sector.

2.2. CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE STUDY

Much has been said about the need to provide the appropriate framework that guide the practice of PR. The primary goal of much PR studies has been aimed at providing a body of theory that is all-inclusive (Motion & Leitch, 2001: 659). Grunig (2001: 2-3) is of the view that PR used to be practiced as an occupation guided by mainly techniques rather than having any theoretical basis. Thus, securing media coverage, preparing press releases, writing speeches, writing and designing of brochures, lobbying representatives in government, staging of special events etc., were used as a basis for PR practice. However, the situation is no longer the case. PR is now practiced as a profession with the development of a body of knowledge. Much of today's practice is based on knowledge of how an audience behaves. The practice

worldwide and the swift advancement of ICT means that more ought to be done to develop a common body of knowledge that aids in the growth of the profession in terms of practice. The efforts to establish a solid theoretical foundation that guides PR has seen the practice evolve with different paradigms/worldviews vying for the attention of practitioners. Of concern though is that most of these bodies of knowledge or theories are structured to suit the practices in the western world, although the belief is that such frameworks can also be used in other cultures (Mersham, Skinner & Rensburg, 2011: 195). Mersham et al (2011:195) believe that the time has come for scholars to develop a body of knowledge of a conceptual framework that speaks to the African situation of PR especially in view of the tremendous growth of the profession on the continent as a result of globalisation.

This study will be anchored on a strong theoretical foundation. To properly investigate the issues raised in the previous chapter, a theoretical framework is necessary for the study. The framework will provide a sound theoretical and empirical basis for the study. The discussion will include worldviews and paradigms, Meta-theory and theories. Table 2.1 gives an overview of the chapter.

Table 2.1. Conceptualisation of the study

Paradigms	Relational paradigm	Reflective paradigm	Two-way symmetrical paradigm
Domain	PR		
Meta-theory	General Excellence Theory		
Theories	Systems Theory Relationship Management Theory		

Source: Researcher's own compilation

2.2.1. The difference between worldviews, paradigms, meta-theories and theories

Musa (2013: 46) acknowledges the importance of worldviews, paradigms, meta-theory and theory to the research process. Musa contends that the three concepts represent three hierarchical levels of decision making within the research process. The ability to clearly articulate paradigms, meta-theories and theories is essential in clarifying and justifying the research approach. Musa (2013: 41) concludes that the choice of theory

used in any research inquiry ultimately relates to the research paradigm and corresponding meta-theory. He therefore establishes a clear interconnection between the concepts. The purpose of this section is to discuss worldviews, paradigms, meta-theories and theories and how they interrelate.

Much of the definitions and practice of PR have been underpinned by different worldviews, paradigms and theories. These have ultimately shaped the evolution of the practice across cultures. Sriramesh and Verčič (2012: 2), for instance, are of the view that PR and other managerial practices are strongly influenced by a myriad of worldviews and habits from different cultural settings, which agrees with the views of Leonard and Ströh (2000: 35), who believe that different people interpret PR differently depending on their worldview. Ultimately though, the goal of such concepts is to develop a model that can be applied to the practice of PR across cultures (Pieccka, 2006: 352).

A search through literature shows a lack of general agreement on the use of the concepts 'paradigm' and 'worldview'. While some authors (Babbie, 2010: 33; Pieczka, 2006: 352; Daymon & Holloway, 2002: 4; Grunig, 1989: 24) use the two words interchangeably, others such as Steyn (2004: 27-58) clearly make a distinction between the two.

Grunig (1992: 34), in his attempt to define worldview, categorised it as theories used to understand and evaluate the various worldviews which influence PR practice. Steyn (2004: 57), after reviewing a set of definitions, came up with what she called 'extra-scientific' (non-scientific) worldviews to refer to attitudes, beliefs, views or mindset of any individual or group of people. Du Plooy (2009: 27) also defines it as "a set of attitudes, beliefs, values or views of social reality characteristic of particular social groups." Keaney (cited in Grunig & White, 1992: 33), regards it as "a set of images and assumptions about the world....organising principles that have variously been called *Gestalten*, plans, structures, schemata." Grunig and White (1992: 35) refer to Meehan in describing worldview as a "conceptual framework through which perceptions are screened," while Suppe (1977) uses a German term *Weltanschauung*, that is, a comprehensive mindset. Brown (1977: 101-103) also used the term "presupposition" to refer to the concept of worldview. The various descriptions of worldviews reveal a lack of common definition among scholars. What appears striking

is that the concept of worldviews is associated with personal beliefs or perceptions about a phenomenon and these beliefs or assumptions influence how individuals act. The worldviews may be borne out of personal experiences, one's profession or even educational background. In the academic field, worldviews of scholars then influence their theoretical perspectives of issues. Worldviews are therefore subjective in nature and not scientific hence one cannot rely on a single worldview to determine the cause of an event.

Yaxley (2013) notes that discussions about PR ultimately reflect specific worldviews; an issue that ought to be examined whether one is developing a theory, considering practice or undertaking research in the field. This is clearly seen, for instance, in the myriad of definitions and dispositions about how the profession ought to be practiced. Indeed, Hutton's assessment of the profession's history led to the conclusion that PR has evolved in terms of definitions and metaphors (1999: 200-201). Hutton categorises the evolvement of PR into five stages, from 'the public be fooled' to 'the public be damned' to 'the public be manipulated' to 'the public be informed' to 'the public be involved or accommodated'. Other scholars such as Grunig and Hunt (1984: 21-23) also introduced the four models of PR which sought to explain the development of PR through its history and practice. These models also reflect some of the different worldviews regarding the practice of PR. For instance, practitioners who subscribe to the asymmetrical worldview attempt to influence the public in ways that are geared towards benefiting the organisation rather than the publics. On the other hand, practitioners who believe in the symmetrical worldview practice an open system policy that leads to mutual understanding between the organisation and the publics.

Grunig and White (1992: 32), in their discussion on the effect of worldviews on PR, posit that several top communication professionals tend to rely on the scientific method to produce a body of theoretical knowledge that will bring order to the confusion that PR finds itself in:

Communication professionals often seem to flounder without direction in their work. In actual practice, public relations has no consistent definition. Realistically, it can be defined as little more than what public relations people do. The work of public relations people varies

tremendously from one organisation to another or from one practitioner to another. To many critics, that work seems unprincipled, unethical and atheoretical (p. 32).

The way people and organisations study and practice PR is greatly influenced by the subjectivity of the human mind. Grunig and White (1992: 36) therefore posit that it is important to address the subjective component of both popular and scientific theories about PR as a means of fostering excellence in communication practice. However, in order to distinguish between excellent PR and less excellent PR, Grunig and White argue that one must be able to compare and evaluate worldviews. Some scholars (Bohm, 1977; Kuhn, 1970; Feyerabend, 1970; Collingwood, 1940, in Skinner, 1994: 15) suggest that worldviews are simply subjective, and that individuals and institutions select one worldview or the other through arguing, fighting, voting, or mobilising supporters rather than through reason, negotiation or compromise. For example, Kearney (cited in Grunig and White 1992:37) argues that worldviews can be evaluated on the basis of internal and external criteria. From the internal perspective, he states that some worldviews have assumptions that “are logically and structurally related to each other better than others.” From an external perspective, some worldviews enable people to relate better to their environments than others. Kearney also believes that worldviews can be judged by “some presumably more valid historical perspective.”

Philosophers such as Suppe (1977) and Shapere (1984, in Grunig and White, 1992: 37), also argue that neutral direct or indirect observations premised on strong background information or background theories can allow theories generated by competing worldviews to be compared. Laudan (in Grunig, 1992: 37) suggests that perhaps the most useful criterion for evaluating worldviews is to determine how worldviews (and the theories these generate) can solve critical issues. For example, in PR, one may ask which worldview generates PR programmes that can lead to conflict resolution and management of issues at the societal, national and international levels while making organisations socially responsible and more effective. After reviewing the myriad of definitions regarding worldview, Grunig and White (1992: 38) conclude that excellent PR is practiced in a logical, coherent, unified and orderly manner - the internal criteria. An excellent worldview of PR is one that solves organisational and human problems effectively, which they referred to as the external

criteria. The authors also emphasised on the concept of ethical PR that allows organisations to show love and care to individuals and groups that they affect within the society.

Before the discussion on paradigms, this discussion will briefly look at another worldview that has been proposed by African scholars in what is termed as the “African worldview”.

The concept of African worldview is not new as it has been applied to the way Africans relate to each other and how such relations affect the business environment (Tilson, 2014; Van Heerden, 2004: 121). Van Heerden points out that one can only understand the nature of the African business environment by first understanding African worldview and cultural foundations. Africans generally see themselves as social beings and this consciousness greatly influences the way they behave, how they express themselves and how they engage in spiritual self-fulfilment. There is a strong interconnectedness and brotherliness as opposed to individualism. This is even more profound especially as the continent is steeped in poverty and being one another's keeper is the only means by which survival is ensured (Van Heerden, 2004: 121). Mersham and Skinner (2009: 309) describe the African worldview as one of the most powerful influences/concepts that shapes the way Africans behave. The worldview is based on the concept of collectivism and recognition of the value of all individuals. This act of collectivism is framed in the African philosophy of '*Ubuntuism*', which means “I am because of others.....stressing interconnections and collectively” (Worthington, 2011: 611). Ubuntu is a value-based traditional philosophy premised on African humanism that runs deeply throughout African thought and action (de Beer & Mersham, 2004: 338) and emphasises communalism rather than individualism (White, 2009: 220). The concept of Ubuntu is a cultural philosophy inherent among the Bantu people of Africa (Natifu & Zikusooka, 2014: 224) and has been in existence as a cultural virtue for centuries (Rensburg, 2008: 253). Fourie (2008: 63) points out that different African cultures and African languages interpret the philosophy differently to mean ‘a person is defined in relation to the community’, ‘that I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am’, that ‘it is through others that one attains selfhood’, and that ‘a person is born for the other’.

Mersham, Skinner and Rensburg (2011: 198) state that when applied to PR, the concept of Ubuntu moves beyond the individual and individual rights while emphasis is placed on community and collectiveness. The African is seen as a participatory being who depends on others for his/her development. There is therefore a high emphasis on negotiation, inclusiveness, transparency and tolerance. For example, among the Bantu people in Uganda, PR means “*relating well with people*,” (Natifu & Zikusooka, 2014: 224). Mersham and Skinner (2009: 309) again note that the African philosophy may explain why PR theorists tend to find African PR intriguing, posing challenges to accepted normative approaches, in the attempt to develop a new and sustainable global model of PR. Therefore, to be able to develop a model that truly reflects the global practice of PR, efforts must be made to understand the context in which PR is practiced in Africa. The implications of the Ubuntu philosophy for post-modern thoughts and western view of PR is framed in the words of Christians (2004):

Since the self cannot be conceived without necessarily conceiving of others, Ubuntu adds a universal and compelling voice against the Enlightenment's atomistic individuals who exist prior to and independently of their social order. In the West, where 'individualism often translates into an impetuous competitiveness', the cooperation entailed by ubuntu's 'plurality of personalities' in a 'multiplicity of relationships' is an attractive, though overwhelming concept. The modernist concept of individuality now has to move from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, from individuality vis-à-vis community to individuality a la community (p. 245).

A study by Angus and Kapanga (2007) on the key drivers of brand growth in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique, for instance, identified among others, the power of the community, word of mouth, tradition and trust, which are key values that permeate through everyday life in ways important to communication management.

Currently, there is a deficiency of African literature on PR from the African worldview. This means that African scholars and practitioners are forced to approach and teach PR based on a western framework. In as much as this is not necessarily bad, Van Heerden (2004: 128) points out that it leads to conflict within the individual once they

are confronted with African realities. The practice, education and research for PR in Africa can only be effective if there is an African body of knowledge based on African philosophy. Mersham, Skinner and Rensburg (2011: 201) posit that Africa is capable of providing a unique contribution to the global practice of PR. The authors found significance in the words of Steve Biko, a celebrated South African anti-apartheid activist, for contemporary PR:

Westerners have on many occasions been surprised at the capacity we have for talking to each other - not for the sake of arriving at a particular conclusion, but merely to enjoy the communication for its own sake.

And:

We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationships. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa - giving the world a more human face.

However, Mersham and Skinner (2009: 310) admit that the field of PR and communication management has some way to go before it can be recognised and given the legitimacy sought for by scholars for decades. Van Heerden (2004: 238) concludes by indicating that the core of social responsibility is summarised in the African worldview and social structures.

Nevertheless, in the light of the global expansion of PR, the question one needs to ask is *whether the African worldview has not been influenced in as far as the practice of PR on the continent is concerned?* A review of the various worldviews/paradigms and models shows some similarities between them and the African worldview. The concept of African worldview in a way reflects the relational and symmetrical paradigms of North America and to some extent that which is practiced in Asia (personal influence and cultural interpreter models). The little literature available (Kiambi & Nadler, 2012; Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2009) shows that PR in Africa is based on relationship building and that good interpersonal relationship is regarded as key to organisational-public relationship (henceforth referred to as OPR). Practitioners play a central role in the

OPR process as both parties socialise and build good relations (Kiambi & Nadler, 2012: 506). It will be interesting to determine how far the African worldview exists in the practice of PR in Ghana. With the number of multinational organisations growing each day in all sectors, including the financial sector, the question is whether the practice of PR will be based on African influences or whether it will be a mixture of other worldviews as determined by the few research studies on the continent. In this study PR practice will be explored and tested based on its roles (activities) and models (purpose). Results will enable the researcher to develop the appropriate framework that will guide the practice of the discipline, not only in the organisations studies but also in Ghana as a whole.

Roux (2010: 54) suggests that the concept of paradigm can be found within worldviews. According to Grunig and White (1992: 35), Kuhn was the first to coin the term 'paradigm' to describe worldview, which stands for "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community." Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 115) define paradigms as consisting of theories, procedures, and assumptions about how researchers perceive their environment or world. Babbie (2010: 33) also defines a paradigm to consist of essential theories/models or frameworks researchers use to "organise observations and reasoning." Kent and Taylor (2011: 60) assert that paradigm is similar to an ideology but agree that paradigms are much more personal and represent models, assumptions, beliefs and values that shape how people perceive reality. According to the authors, paradigm can vary by a number of factors including age, gender, ethnicity, and social class. Finally, Chalmers (in Willis, 2007: 8), defines a paradigm as being "made up of the general theoretical assumption and laws, and techniques for their application that the members of a particular community adopt." Chalmers categorises paradigm into five basic components:

- Explicitly stated laws and theoretical assumptions.
- Standard ways of applying the fundamental laws to a variety of situations.
- Instrumentation and instrumental techniques that bring the laws of the paradigm to bear on the real world.
- General metaphysical principles that guide work within the paradigm.

- General methodological prescriptions about how to conduct work within the paradigm.

By way of explanation, a paradigm consists of a comprehensive belief system, worldview, or framework that guides research and practice in a field. Although Steyn (2004: 58) regards paradigm as representing a scientific worldview (i.e. the views of a group of scholars), and worldview as consisting of 'extra-scientific' worldviews held by any group of people regardless of their background, it is the view of this researcher that the terms are related. Indeed, this research agrees with Roux (2010: 54) and Van Heerden (2004: 30) that the term worldview is used as a bigger umbrella under which paradigm operates, hence the two can be used interchangeably. Roux (2010: 54) contends that paradigms consist of theories, models, and assumptions which guide the conceptualisation and research methods within a discipline. A worldview enables the researcher to appreciate the world and the paradigms used and this in turn directs the specific issue under study. This view is shared by Sefotho (2015: 25) who argues that paradigms are selected based on how researchers view the world and make sense of it, and Huitt (2011) who states that worldviews form the basis of paradigms. Steyn (2004:55) is of the view that it is possible to use a variety of contrasting paradigms that are aligned to each other, regardless of the discipline. It is therefore possible for a researcher to base their research on different paradigms. To Steyn, there is no right or wrong paradigm hence a paradigm concerning a particular issue under study can be used as long as it is applicable to that situation.

Roux (2010: 55) emphasises the importance of identifying and declaring the paradigm within which a research study is categorised. Paradigms provide the framework for understanding observations (Babbie, 2010: 33), which concurs with the conclusion by Grix that "...all research takes place within a paradigm, whether it is explicitly stated or not" (2010: 116). A declaration of the paradigm influencing the research ensures an understanding of the particular theories used in a research study (Steyn, 2004: 55). Since the key issue is to investigate how PR is practiced in terms of roles and models, these would be regarded as PR paradigms. Steyn (2003: 74) believes that in as much as the models of PR are considered to be worldviews, they can also be considered as scientific worldviews or paradigms since they have gone through the traditional research processes which have guided numerous research studies. Dozier (1992:

327) referred to the PR roles as abstractions of everyday activities of the practitioner. The roles provide an understanding of the function of PR and organisational communication. Steyn (2003: 74) is again of the view that PR roles, despite being referred to as worldviews, can be regarded as scientific worldviews or paradigms since research traditions have been applied to each of them and they have directed and guided research studies.

Paradigms consist of meta-theories which guide thinking within the paradigm (Roux, 2010: 55). A paradigm is thus broader than a meta-theory (Ritzer, 1975). Meta-theories are used to guide the thinking about a social phenomenon and to provide the necessary assumption which also guides the theorising of a research study (McPhee, 2000: 3). Meta-theories are regarded as the philosophical component of a paradigm that determines the construction of models and theories (Wood, 2012: 178). Hjørland (2005b: 5) refers to meta-theories as “theories about the description, analysis or criticism of the theories in a domain. They are mostly internal to a domain, and may also be termed ‘paradigms’, ‘traditions’ or ‘schools’.” Holtzhausen (1995: 44) also defines it as consisting of assumptions that extend beyond the content of a theory, including philosophical questions about the basic assumptions of the field (in Holtzhausen & Verwey, 1996: 25). Holtzhausen therefore projects the need for the meta-theoretical aspect of PR to play a critical role in the determination of the parameters of the field of study as well as the extent to which PR is defined. Leeper (2001: 93) considers a meta-theory as consisting of “assumptions about the fundamental nature of the phenomena of interest.

These assumptions are frequently unrecognized and influence choices of theory as well as method.” Hazleton and Botan (1989: 7) are of the view that before theorists and researchers can consider alternatives it will be essential to recognise meta-theoretic assumptions. Suls and Rothman (2004: 119) argue that the field of science cannot advance without an implicit or explicit set of meta-theories. This corroborates the conclusion of Guba and Lincoln (1994: 105) who used the term ‘paradigm’ to refer to meta-theory; describing it as “a basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in an ontological and epistemologically fundamental way.” In effect, paradigm is considered as a broader philosophical view within which meta-theories exist. Hazleton and Botan (1989: 7) contend that meta-

theory summarises the models and theories within a paradigm by providing critical assumptions about the discipline within the paradigm. Meta-theory thus consists of a broader conceptual understanding of situations rather than theories but is less expansive than paradigm (Rioux, 2010: 10).

The selection of any theory is premised on a researcher's worldview, paradigm, and meta-theory (Le Roux, 2010: 55). It is therefore important for the meta-theory to be well understood as it can "blind researchers to certain paths for understanding and learning" (Hazleton & Botan, 1989: 4). Grunig (1989e: 17) notes the importance of meta-theory to the practice of PR by indicating that improving the ethical quality and chances of resolving PR issues can only be possible when scholars understand the meta-theory used. A clear identification and articulation of assumptions at the meta-theoretic level enables the researcher to select a particular theory or theories that will provide a deeper understanding of the issue under investigation (Musa, 2013: 46). A theory is a systematic explanation of observations relating to a social phenomenon (Babbie, 2010: 10). Within the meta-theoretical approach there can be many theories. However, selection of a particular theory or theories is dependent on its applicability to the research problem (Le Roux, 2010: 56). In view of the above discussion the Excellence Theory will be used as the meta-theory. The Excellence Theory posits that excellent PR must be practiced symmetrically. Therefore, a mutual cooperation between organisations and stakeholders is needed if the organisation is to achieve its goals and objectives.

Within the meta-theory, specific theories which influence a researcher's understanding of the issue under investigation are clearly identified and articulated. A theory is a set of "interrelated set of constructs (or variables) formed into propositions or hypotheses that specify the relationship among variables (typically in terms of magnitude or direction)" (Creswell, 2008: 51). Theories essentially guide the researcher in defining the research question and in analysing and interpreting data.

Worldviews, paradigms, meta-theory and theory assist the researcher to present data from an underlying philosophical perspective. These concepts allow the researcher to clearly articulate the research process as well as justify and clarify the research approach (Musa, 2013: 46).

2.2.2. Paradigms framing the study

Literature (Roux, 2010; Gupta & Bartnett, 2007) depicts a general acknowledgement of the differences in how PR is practiced across cultures. As discussed in the previous chapter (see section 1.5.3.1), PR as practiced in Europe is different from that of the USA and to some extent Asia. Whereas Europe practices the reflective paradigm, the American system supports what they call the relational paradigm. In Africa and Ghana in particular, it is not clear which kind of paradigm is practiced and this is exacerbated by the paucity of literature on the subject, although research by Ming-Yi and Baah-Boakye (2009) gives an indication of PR practice in Ghana being influenced mostly by the personal influence and cultural interpreter models and a little bit of the symmetrical model. However, with the influx of multinational organisations and other national organisations with international links, it is significant to determine if this is still the case or whether there has been a paradigm shift in PR practice in Ghana.

Although there are a number of paradigms, this research will restrict itself to the following paradigms:

- The relational paradigm;
- The reflective paradigm; and
- The two-way symmetrical paradigm.

2.2.2.1. The relational paradigm

PR research, since the early 80s, has increasingly focused on the management of relationships between organisations and its publics (Ki & Hon, 2007; Ledingham, 2003; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Ledingham & Bruning (in Bortree, 2015: 145) proposed a definition of the organisational- public relationship as “the state which exists between an organisation and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, and political and/or cultural well-being of the other entity.” Specifically, PR must be perceived as “...the management of a relationship between organisations and publics” where there is a common understanding of each other’s interest (Ledingham, 2003: 181). The relational paradigm sees PR as a management function concerned with building mutually beneficial relationship between publics and the organisation using a two-way dialogue to build trust, preserve or reduce conflict, and build community (Heath, 2001: 3; Grunig

et al 2002: x; Ledingham, 2003: 181; Cutlip et al 2000: 7; Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005: 240). At its core, the relational paradigm emphasises reciprocity, trust, mutual legitimacy, openness, mutual satisfaction, and mutual understanding (Szabo, 2014: 116). What this means is that both the organisation and the stakeholders recognise their interdependence to ensure survival and growth (Cutlip et al 2000: 15, 17). Ledingham argues that this is consistent with the systems theory and the two-way symmetrical model and also accommodates middle range theories (2003:181). In effect, the purpose of PR is to generate mutual benefits and understanding for both the organisation and its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 4). Grunig (2015: xxiii) argues that organisations cannot achieve their goals without developing a relationship with their stakeholders. At the heart of relationship development is PR. Grunig points out that PR provides essential support to organisations, publics, and societies through relationships.

In their edited book *“Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations”*, Ki, Kim and Ledingham (2015, in Valentini, 2016: 15) offer a detailed account of current research on relationship in PR scholarship. The core argument of the book is premised on the fact that relationships are essential for achievement of organisational goals and that PR can provide critical support in relationship management, beyond image/impression management through communication. The relational paradigm reflects the many definitions of PR as the management of a mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and its publics (Cutlip et al 2000; PRSA, 2012). Heath (2001: 3), in the introduction to his book *Handbook of public relations*, pointed out that “the new view of the practice of public relations is the mutually beneficial relationships that an organisation enjoys... the new view of public relations assumes that markets are attracted to and kept by organisations that can create mutually beneficial relationships.” Heath (2001: 8) posits that PR is “a relationship-building professional activity that adds value to organizations because it increases the willingness of markets, audiences, and publics to support them rather than to oppose their efforts.” Other scholars such as Hutton (1999), Ledingham and Bruning (2000) and Center, Jackson, Smith and Stansberry (2014), have variously described PR as based on “relationship building between an organisation and its publics.” Within the framework of the relational approach, communication is viewed as the central tool in the initiation,

nurturing, and maintenance of OPR. The quality of the OPR is therefore dependent on the value of the communication (Ledingham, 2006: 413). Dutta and Kumar (2015: 262) concur when they acknowledge the conceptualisation of communication as a tool used to aid in the management of relationships with strategic stakeholders and publics. Verčič and Van-Ruler (2002: 5-6) however, in their discussion on whether PR is based on relationships or communication, argue that in Europe at least, there is no difference between communication and relationship. They note that the argument that communication is a necessary but not sufficient foundation for PR cannot be valid as one cannot make a distinction between communication and relationship. They conclude that the idea of PR as either being “all about communication” or “all about relationships” is a matter of different perspectives, that is, “what one sees as communication is what another uses the word relationships for.” Dutta and Kumar (2015: 263) however posit that attempts to address the issue of relationship building led to varying definitions of OPR. For instance, Broom, Casey and Ritchey (2000:18) defined it as follows:

Organization-public relationships are represented by the patterns of interaction, transaction, exchange, and linkage between an organization and its publics. These relationships have properties that are distinct from the identities, attributes, and perceptions of the individuals and social collectivities in the relationships. Though dynamic in nature, organization-public relationships can be described at a single point in time and tracked over time

Regardless of the different perspectives, the core idea behind the relational paradigm is reflected in the concept of mutual benefits for the organisations and their relevant stakeholders. Ehling (1992: 662) sums up the relational approach to PR by categorising it as “an important change in the primary mission of PR.” Dozier (1995: 85) similarly posits that “the purpose and direction of an organisation (its mission) is affected by relationships with key constituents (publics) in the organisation’s environment.” From this perspective communication is viewed as “a strategic management function (that helps) manage relationships with key publics that affect organisational mission goals and objectives.”

The relational paradigm, in essence, serves as a platform for relating PR strategies and organisational goals in ways that will show its value to the organisation (Ledingham & Brunning, 2000: xvi). The objective of PR is to maintain and improve the relationship between the organisation and its publics. Hence strategies and tactics developed are assessed in relation to their effect on organisational-public relationship. This requires a lot of work on the part of the practitioner. PR therefore contributes to organisational effectiveness and performance by developing, sustaining, and maintaining relationships (Grunig & Haung, 2000: 30).

Valentini (2016:17), after reviewing the discussion on the relational approach to PR, concluded that these discussions failed to answer a number of questions such as the actual role of communication in developing mutual and beneficial relationship processes, how communication discursively constructs a relationship and provides relational meanings in a relationship process, how relationships can be formed between an abstract entity such as an organisation and its publics, and how to deal with non-linear, dyadic relationships where organisations are not the centre in the relationship process, but only one of the actors among others. The relational approach has also been criticised for being overly focused on the organisational-public relationship while seemingly ignoring the most essential problem in PR, which is the societal legitimisation of organisations (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005: 239). Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 240) argue that the orientation of PR towards relationship management is insufficient as the idea of relationship management fails to account for the plural nature of the purpose of PR to organisations and their publics. Based on these arguments a new paradigm was proposed which reflect PR at the societal level. This paradigm will be addressed next.

2.2.2.2. Reflective paradigm

The reflective paradigm, which Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 253) call “reflective communication management”, looks at public relations from a different perspective to that of the relational paradigm. The paradigm is premised on the continuous adjustment of the corporate decision-making processes to the norms and values of society. It lays emphasis on the need for organisations to play a critical role in the development of society as it is their duty to do so. This allows the organisation to stay inclusive and preserve its license to operate (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005: 253, 2002: 16). Holmstrom (2005: 502) also indicates that “reflection increases sensitivity to

interdependence and increases the independent identity.” Thus, through reflection, organisations are able to look at themselves within a larger social context. The organisations in turn develop restrictions and coordinating mechanisms in their decision-making processes. The reflective paradigm therefore shows PR as the social consciousness of the organisation and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to understand and convey to the organisation the perspectives, values, and views of the stakeholders/society (Roux, 2010: 36). The reflective paradigm is mostly used in Europe and is regarded as an extension of the relational paradigm (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2002: 16).

Interestingly, the reflective paradigm does not appear to have any critiques. Review of literature did not reveal any criticism of the approach. Instead, its usage appears to be supported by further research (Marsh, 2010; Burger, 2009). Perhaps the lack of criticism of the reflective paradigm may be due to its close links with the relational and symmetrical paradigms as well as the fact that it takes on a broader dimension by looking at communication practice from the societal perspective and not focusing on just organisational-public relationship. What is notable though is that the theory also appears to neglect PR practice from non-western perspectives. It also introduces the European bias hence its validity and reliability in terms of whether it will work outside of Europe and possibly the USA is not really known. Although Steyn (2003) found some semblance between South African PR roles (strategist, manager and technician) and the reflective roles of Europe, this is not enough to empirically conclude that the European paradigm exists outside of Europe. Moreover, Steyn’s research was confined to European PR roles.

2.2.2.3. The two-way symmetrical communication paradigm

One of the earliest and most dominant paradigms is Grunig and Hunt’s (1984: 21-24) asymmetric and symmetrical models of PR. The models reflect the different ways that PR was practiced throughout its history. The first three models, press agency/public information/two-way asymmetric, portray the one-sided nature of communications. Power is maintained by the organisation and aims to influence stakeholders. Grunig (1992: 43) categorises the asymmetric model under seven assumptions: internal orientation (inability to see the organisations as outsiders do), a closed system (information flows out but not in), efficiency (control of cost more important than

innovation), elitism (leader of the organisation knows best), conservatism (resistance to change), tradition (as culture-generating, thus providing the organisational glue), and central authority (autocratic organisations, no autonomy for employees). Although the asymmetrical model shows a form of two-way communication, its purpose is still one way persuasive communication. Grunig (2001: 17) further states the true purpose of the asymmetrical model is to attempt a change in public behaviour without necessarily changing the organisation. Practitioners of this worldview operate through propaganda (press agency) or disseminate information that favours the organisation (public information). Grunig further articulates the selfish nature of the two-way asymmetric model by intimating that practitioners tend to use scientific persuasion by utilising the services of research firms to plan messages. This is done because the organisations believe it is right. L'Etang and Pieczka (2006: 353) sum it up by describing the asymmetrical model as a closed system model corresponding to the mechanistic system of organisations. Grunig and White (1992: 39), in effect, view the asymmetrical model as the 'dominant worldview' in PR that is widely practiced. The authors call it an "alluring mind-set" for most organisations.

The symmetrical model on the other hand highlights PR as dialogue-based communication based on relationship building. This type of model portrays the organisation and stakeholders as partners aiming to find a solution to a common issue. Grunig and White (1992: 31) believe that "for public relations to be excellent, public relations must be viewed as symmetrical, idealistic and critical, and managerial." This means that the practitioner must aim for a mutual understanding by serving the interest of the organisation and the publics. The symmetrical model espouses holism, interdependence (with other systems in the environment), an open system (free exchange of information across the boundary) and moving equilibrium (with other organisations) (Grunig, 1992: 43-44).

Since their inception, the two-way asymmetrical and the two-way symmetrical paradigms, have been discussed greatly in PR scholarship. Botan (1993: 109) for instance, describes the symmetrical model as the reason why there is a discussion about PR paradigm. In effect, the discussion on PR paradigms cannot be complete without the symmetrical model. Botan and Hazleton (2006: 6) expressly state: "Over the last 20 years, a leading body of work has developed around Symmetry/Excellence theory which has probably done more to develop public relations theory and

scholarship than any other single school of thought.” Other scholars (Laskin, 2009; Sallot, Lyon, Acosta-Alzuru & Jones, 2003; Cutlip et al 2000: 409; Dozier & Ehling, 1992: 177) have discussed the impact of the symmetrical model on PR practice worldwide. Grunig and Hunt (1984: 100-101) argue that the symmetrical model reflects PR practice in its advanced form. Grunig and White (1992: 40) are of the view that each of the two dominant worldviews is influenced by presuppositions regarding the social role of PR. They argue that whereas the asymmetrical engages in selfish, unethical and socially irresponsible behaviour by undertaking activities that benefit the organisation, the two-way symmetrical worldview tries to gain a mutual understanding by balancing the interest of the organisation and its publics. Its activities are based on research and use communication to manage conflict with strategic publics (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002: 15).

Grunig and White (1992: 50-55) and Grunig (1994: 69), in their discussion on the dominant worldviews of PR, noted that in dealing with the role that PR plays in society, both the asymmetric and symmetric worldviews are influenced in four ways - the pragmatic, conservative, radical, idealistic, and critical social roles. With *pragmatic* role, practitioners see themselves as representing the interest of the client and to help the client achieve their set objectives. The pragmatic worldview perceives society as comprising of markets, target audiences, and competing groups, from whom one can win commercial advantage. There is a lack of attention paid to ethical standards and social responsibility of the client's organisation. The *conservative* PR practitioners see their role as a defensive one that is, defending the privileges of the economically powerful. Practitioners ensure the status quo is maintained by defending and protecting the capitalist system from attacks by activists, unions, government, and socialists. *Radical* practitioners see society as a system where power and influence, which can be used to bring about change, are obtained through knowledge and information. Essentially PR makes a crucial contribution to change, not only in the organisation, but society at large. Contribution to change is carried out through provision of information which can be used in public debate, to establish links between groups in society, and bring resources together that can be brought to bear on the solution of social problems. The pragmatic, conservative, and radical social roles are viewed as asymmetric in nature. The *idealistic* worldview - which is symmetrical in nature - presupposes that public interest is paramount to the practice of PR. The

practitioner serves the public interest, develops mutual understanding between an organisation and their publics, contributes to informed debates about issues in society, and facilitates dialogue between an organisation and their publics. The element of reciprocity is crucial under this worldview. This is in sharp contrast to the radical practitioner who sees change as being one dimensional. Grunig (1994: 70) contends that the idealistic social roles have been articulated for many years and that much of the practice of PR really follows the pragmatic, conservative, and radical social roles, which are asymmetrical. Grunig and White (1992) again identified another worldview which sought to view PR more as a *technique* than a theory. This worldview conforms to the press agency and public information models of PR and is asymmetrical. They argue that for PR to be excellent it must be both technical and managerial (p. 55).

2.2.2.3.1. Criticisms of the symmetric paradigm

The worldview of excellent PR, especially the symmetrical model, is not without its critics. Edward (2006: 148) for instance, argues that classifying the symmetrical model as a management function is taking a narrow approach which risks oversimplifying the complex nature of human behaviour. She points out that unofficial organisational structures and internal power struggles can interfere with the communication process. Karlberg (1996) and Leitch and Neilson (2001) also criticise the model for failing to take into account the diversified nature of the publics. According to Leitch and Neilson (2001: 138), “publics are not fixed categories waiting to be identified but rather are constructed and reconstructed through the discourses in which they participate.” Karlberg on the other hand argues that the models propounded by Grunig tend to portray publics as “primarily consumers and the public sphere (as) primarily a market place” (p. 266). Szondi (2006: 122) also points out the cultural specific nature of the model, and views the public as a “liberal democratic marketplace in the US.” Although Thurlow (2015: 301) acknowledges that “the assumption that asymmetrical and symmetrical worldviews influence the selection of models and consequently the effectiveness of public relations is central to Grunig’s theory of public relations excellence,” she argues that available literature does not show the existence of such worldviews, nor does it link them to PR practice. Indeed, the authors of the Excellence project were not oblivious of the perceived flaws in the four models, especially the two-way symmetrical model. “The four models of PR, and especially the two-way symmetrical model, have been the most controversial and the most debated

component of the Excellence Theory since our theory book was published” (Grunig et al 2002: 307). Others (L’Etang, 1996; Pieczka, 1995; Kunczik, 1994) describe the two-way symmetrical model as utopian in nature. The argument of these scholars points to the fact there is no true symmetrical relations and that even if communications appear two-way, the end result is likely to be asymmetrical. That is, corporations will end up advancing their positions rather than work on equal terms with the stakeholders. Laskin (2009: 46) notes that the asymmetric and symmetric models fail to recognise the relationship-building aspect of PR. Leitch and Neilson (2001: 129) conclude by saying:

Two-way symmetrical model, thus, is being engaged when asymmetrical communications fail and it helps the company “to dilute the negotiating power of those (critical) stakeholders” by making compromises that in the long run are still in the interests of organization rather than society or critical stakeholders.

Regardless of these criticisms, the general characteristics of the two-way symmetric and to some extent two-way asymmetric model, which emphasises on PR as a management function and the importance of research, makes it an acceptable model for the practice in today’s society as has been suggested by Ferreira (2003: 134). Others also believe that, despite the arguments against the symmetrical model, they are still relevant today as when they were first promulgated (Waddington, 2012; 2013). Laskin (2009: 37) describes it as the most dominant theoretical perspective in PR. Although Grunig and Grunig (1992: 312) acknowledge the idealistic and normative nature of the symmetric model, they also believe that the two-way symmetrical model represents excellent PR and is more ethical and effective than other models (1992: 303-308). Grunig and White (1992: 31) conclude by insisting that for PR to be excellent, it must be symmetrical, idealistic, critical, and managerial.

2.2.3. Meta-theory used in the study

This section will discuss the meta-theory used in the study. Roux (2010: 67) asserts that before discussing how a theory is used in a study, it is important to understand how the theories were used by the researcher.

2.2.3.1 Inductive versus deductive reasoning

Roux (2010: 67) points out that knowledge of the kind of research a researcher is doing, that is, whether inductive or deductive, is crucial to determine the nature of the research, as well as how theories are used in the research. Inductive reasoning moves from the specific to the general. It starts with a set of specific observations and moves to a general set of propositions about the observations under study. The inductive approach therefore collects data, analyses patterns in the data, and theorises from the data (Blackstone, 2012: 41; Babbie, 2010: 22). Babbie however indicates that the inductive approach does not fully explain the reason for the existence of the pattern. Meaning it does not answer the “why” (Babbi, 2010: 22).

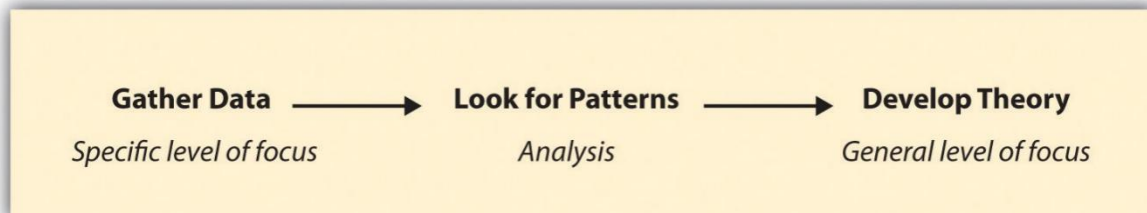


Figure 2.1: Inductive Reasoning (adapted from Blackstone 2012)

The deductive method on the other hand moves from a more specific approach to the specific, sometimes known as the “top-down” approach. The deductive approach usually starts with a social theory about a topic of interest which is then narrowed to a more specific hypothesis that can be tested. The approach therefore develops hypotheses based on a theory, collects data that can be used to test the hypotheses, and assesses whether the data collected supports the hypotheses (Blackstone, 2012: 43; Babbie, 2010: 23; Trochim, 2006).

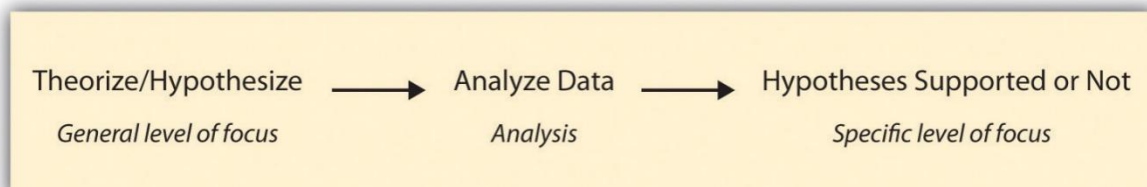


Figure 2.2: Deductive reasoning (adapted from Blackstone, 2012)

The inductive method tends to be open-ended and exploratory at the initial stages while deductive reasoning tends to be narrow focused in nature and concerns itself with testing or confirming hypotheses. Unlike the inductive approach, the deductive approach moves from the “why” to the “whether”, that is, seeking confirmation. Blackstone (2012: 44) indicates that regardless of the seemingly different approaches to research, inductive and deductive reasoning can complement each other. The two can be seen as a circular form where one leads to the other, what Bhattacharjee (2012: 3) refers to as “two halves of the research cycle that constantly iterates between theory and observations” (Figure 2.3). Due to the exploratory nature of this study, inductive reasoning is essential in examining the applicable theories to establish how PR is practiced among the organisations studied whereas deductive reasoning is essential in testing concepts and patterns that are known from theory using empirical data. Roux (2010: 69) points out that used together, deductive and inductive reasoning means that the theory used serves as a guideline and framework in the study “but not as the boundaries within which results should be fit.” The following figure illustrates the complimentary nature of inductive and deductive reasoning

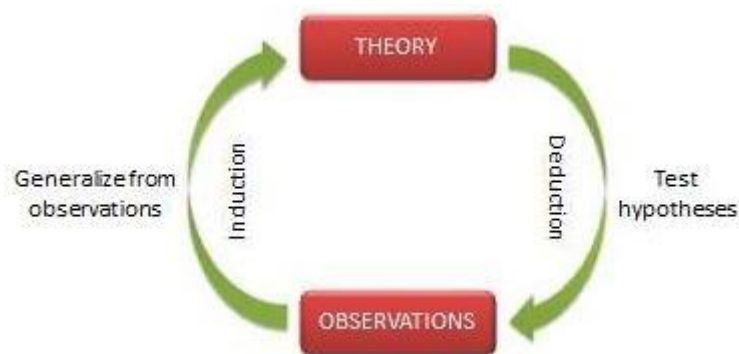


Figure 2.3: The cycle of research (adapted from Bhattacharjee, 2012)

2.2.3.2. General excellence theory as a metatheory

In reviewing the Excellence Theory, the researcher realises the importance of the theory to this study. One of the key elements of this study is to determine how PR is practiced in the financial services sector. Dozier, Grunig and Grunig (1995: 4), based on their study, conclude that excellent PR is universal across countries regardless of the industry or type of organisation one works with. The authors point out that

communication excellence consist of knowledge or expertise that is beyond any public, organisational division or unit, industry, organisational type, or national setting. In view of this and due to the little available literature on how PR is practiced in Africa, and especially in Ghana, the Excellence study provides the right meta-theoretical foundation on which to base this research. Le Roux (2010: 69) postulates that the Excellence Theory describes the characteristics of the PR practitioner and the organisational culture that the PR practitioner needs to practice excellent PR and be able to contribute to organisational performance.

The Excellence Theory is one of the most discussed and critiqued theories in PR. Laskin (2009: 37) considers it the most dominant theoretical perspective in the field of PR. A number of publications have indeed tried to show a link between effective organisations and what is called excellent PR (Kent & Taylor, 2006: 10). Sallot, Lyon, Acosta-Alzuru and Jones (2003: 51) also suggest that the theory has “the largest share” of theory building in PR. Browning (2010: 1) calls it the “most dominant and influential paradigm in PR theory.” The Excellence Theory is an essential and defining statement of what constitutes effective PR in an organisation. The theory was a result of a 15 year study by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (Grunig, 2008: 1620) to determine the features of what they called ‘excellent communications’ and of the organisations that engage in excellent PR. The theory discusses how PR contributes to organisational effectiveness, its organisation and management, environmental conditions within an organisation that makes the organisation more effective, and how organisations determine the monetary value of PR (Grunig, 2008: 1620). The theory attempts to explain the role of the communication manager in the dominant coalition. It presupposes that a communication/PR manager can contribute to the overall effectiveness of an organisation by being part of the dominant coalition; That is, PR can be part of the planning and decision-making process (a management function) and play a key role in ensuring the organisation achieves its set objectives (Heath & Coombs, 2006: 199). When PR is practiced as a management function, it can be used by the various departments within the organisation, such as the legal team, to help advise the organisation on important decisions. Practitioners are empowered to engage in symmetric (two-way) communication rather than one-way messaging. The Excellence Theory is an amalgamation of a number of theories including the four models of PR identified by Grunig and Hunt in their earlier studies and is based around

the Systems Theory (Waterman, 2012: 1). The Excellence Theory is considered as an integration of strategic management theories of PR into a greater whole and seeks to address the question: How, why and to what extent does communication contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives and what are the characteristics of a PR function that are most likely to make an organisation effective? Again, they sought to answer what they called the excellent question: How must PR be practiced and the communication function organised for it to contribute most to organisational effectiveness? (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002: 24; Grunig, 1992: 5). At its core, the Excellence Theory attempts “to build good long-term relationships with strategic publics” (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002: 57), but for this to occur, PR must be practiced in an excellent way. Bowen (2013: 323) notes that the main objective of the Excellence Theory is to provide understanding of how PR as a management function can contribute effectively to the planning and response processes necessary for organisational effectiveness. This contribution has monetary value for the organisation (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Public relations contributes to organizational effectiveness when it helps reconcile the organisation's goals with the expectations of its strategic constituencies. This contribution has monetary value to the organisation. Public relations contributes to effectiveness by building quality, and long-term relationships with strategic constituencies. Public relations is most likely to contribute to effectiveness when the senior public relations manager is a member of the dominant coalition where he or she is able to shape the organisation's goals and to help determine which external publics are most strategic. (p. 10)

PR, thus achieves excellence when it facilitates the reconciliation of the organisation's goals with the expectations of key stakeholders (Franklin et al 2009: 83). Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2006: 24-50) categorised the theory into four levels:

- *Organisational level:* At this level PR must be recognised as a management function. That is, it must be part of the dominant coalition that takes decisions for and on behalf of the organisation. PR practitioners must report directly to the senior-most person in the organisation. This allows the practitioner to

develop strategies and programmes that truly reflect two-way symmetric communication.

- *Programme level:* PR programmes should be strategic in nature in order to meet objectives.
- *Societal level:* Organisations should realise their impact on other organisations and stakeholders. This means they must be socially responsible.
- *Functional level:* PR is seen as an integrated function not sublimated to any other department, including marketing, and reporting to senior management. When this happens, the organisation is less likely to focus on long-term relationship with its constituents and likely to engage in asymmetrical communication.

Excellent communication is therefore deliberate and proactive in its activities and is backed by research (Waters, 2013: 69). When practitioners are allowed to practice proactive PR (as a management function) they are more likely to engage with stakeholders to the benefit of the organisation. For example, clients of the financial services can send feedback about the activities of the institutions. The practitioner then sends the feedback to the dominant coalition and helps them make a decision that serves everyone's interest. Waters (2013: 70) cites an example where American owners of football teams in the UK who employed excellent communication had more hospitable reception from fans than those who did not. What this means is that organisations that employ the excellence principles are in a better position to achieve effectiveness compared to those who employ the asymmetric position. Van Heerden (2004: 5) states that the ability of PR in contributing to organisational effectiveness is premised on the concepts of autonomy, interdependence, and relationships. So for organisations to be effective they must be able to adapt, cooperate, and interact with groups capable of limiting their autonomy. She concludes by asserting that organisations that have good relationships ultimately become more effective due to their high level of freedom and autonomy. The core duty of PR is therefore to build relationships and manage interdependence.

The Excellence Theory shows the value of PR to organisational effectiveness. The quality of relationship between an organisation and its internal and external environment is based on their level of interaction and how they view each other. Organisations must be able to solve problems and satisfy the needs of stakeholders

as well as management. Failure to do this could result in stakeholders putting pressure on the organisation to change or oppose it in ways that add cost and risk to policies and decisions (Grunig, 2008: 1620). Positive relationships are therefore crucial to organisations as they reduce cost of litigation, regulation, legislation, and negative publicity caused by poor relationships, reduce the risk of making decisions that affect different stakeholders, or increase revenue by providing products and services needed by stakeholders (Grunig, 2008). PR involvement in strategic management empowers them to develop strategies that strengthen the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders.

The excellence study itself, like any dominant theory, has been subjected to critical examination with diverse opinion regarding its usefulness, particularly in different settings and among organisations with self-interest. The excellence study tends to follow the same principle as two-way symmetrical communication which is regarded as ethical and the best way to practice PR. Critics such as L'Etang (2006) describe it as a misrepresentation of the reality of the communication process in organisations where the practice of PR is influenced by the interest of the organisation. Cheney and Christensen (2001: 181) also suggest that the theory be used with caution as it is nothing more than 'self-reports' by managers. They argue that symmetric communication, as postulated by Grunig, does not consider the various systems of power and influence that shape PR practices. After critically analysing the theoretical foundations for systems theories and the Excellence Theory, Pieczka (2006) concluded that much as the theory has a good foundation, it was nevertheless filled with many contradictions. For instance, although two-way symmetrical communication is based on open dialogue and negotiation, practitioners can however only be effective when they are part of the dominant coalition. She also argues that the research questions that defined the theory and established effective PR in terms of benefits resulted in a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' that presents two-way dialogue as the best. Meaning, organisations that do not subscribe to two-way communication have failed; a situation that is not acceptable especially when dealing with stakeholders in environments where the culture greatly influences the nature of PR practice. The idealistic nature of the Excellence Theory was not lost on Larissa Grunig when she admitted to the likely elusive nature of two-way symmetrical communication during the PRSA conference in 2010:

The interactive nature of the social media, of the digital media, makes it more possible than it was in the 60s or 70s or 80s or 90s or even 2000 to have a two-way balanced dialogue with the public. Before that, we always talked about the importance of symmetrical balanced communication but try to find any organizations that did this successfully (L. Grunig & J. Grunig, 2011: 43).

This appears to support Macnamara's (2009: 11) view that despite the rapid growth of social media as a medium of interactive communication, key areas of PR practices still remain firmly in a control paradigm that is focused on one-way, top-down monologue. Browning (2010: 126) admits that the Excellence Theory does have its strengths but still casts doubt on its efficacy and therefore rejected the idea of the theory as the best model for PR practice. Larskin (2012: 365) also called it an unrealistic utopia and normative and hence misleading in its principles. Kenny (2016: 87-88) reviewed the diverse criticisms of the theory and concluded that the theory extends corporate capitalism selectively through globalisation, thereby perpetuating inequalities of power. This occurs through the imposition of mono-cultural and normative management models hence devaluing national traditions, minorities, and cultural differences while subjecting the well-being of society to corporate profitability. These criticisms have certain things in common in that they view the theory as being unrealistic, normative, and disregarding environmental variables, especially culture, that influences how PR is actually practiced. It will be interesting to see if these criticisms are valid within a culturally sensitive environment like Ghana, particularly in the financial services sector.

2.2.4. Theories used for the study

This section will discuss the various theories used to support the aim of the study. Theories predict how things happen by relating actions to events (Lattimore et al 2012: 51). Theories serve as the foundation to understand how PR is described and practiced. It also provides a framework that allows practitioners to understand, organise, and integrate the various activities and purposes of PR (Broom & Sha, 2012: 148). There is no one single theory that explains the practice of PR. Lattimore et al (2012: 61) note that in making a decision about building successful relationships practitioners tend to consider a number of theories. For the purpose of this research,

the author has selected the following theories for discussion: The Systems Theory and the Relationship Management Theory

2.2.4.1. Systems Theory

One of the dominant theories used to explain much of PR practice and other disciplines is the Systems Theory. The theory has its roots in the biological approach of Ludwig von Bertalanffy and emphasises the interconnectedness of the human body. The systems approach is defined as “a system of interacting units that endures through time within an established boundary by responding and adjusting to change pressures from the environment to achieve and maintain goal states” (Broom & Sha, 2012: 151). This agrees with Ludwig’s (in Brooks and Walls, 2008) definition of systems as “an entity which maintains its existence through the mutual interaction of its parts.” Systems are “characterized by an assemblage or combination of parts whose relations make them interdependent” (Scott & Jaffe, 1995). In adopting this theory, Grunig and Hunt (1984: 8) defined a system/organisation as a ‘sub-system’ that affects each other and continuously interacts with the environment. Organisations are therefore viewed as systems set up to achieve goals that benefit both the organisation and its publics.

The theory states that organisations depend on their environments with which it has an essential relationship. This system is defined by “mutual interaction”, meaning that organisations must see interaction with their environments as key to their survival (Bowen, Rawlins & Martin 2012; Gregory, 2000; Weaver, 2011: 253; Mehta & Xavier, 2009: 193; Gregory, 2006: 27). As the external environment changes, organisations must also change by adapting and evolving. Lattimore et al (2012: 52) describe it as a set of interrelated parts, adapting and adjusting to changes in the political, economic, and social environments in which they operate. The systems theory provides a context within which an organisation and its relationship with the environment are assessed. In the view of Mehta and Xavier (2009: 193), the purpose of an organisation is to create and achieve goals that will benefit both the organisation and the environment it operates in. Such goals can consist of growth in profits and sales, gaining investor confidence/support, improving employment ratio, creating new products, or a lower carbon footprint (2009: 194). Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002: 93) assert that the systems theory emphasises the interdependence of organisations within their own

environments. What this means is that organisations are systems that depend highly on their environment, both internally and externally, for essential elements, including raw materials, employees who provide labour, stakeholders or clients who purchase the services and so on. In the same way if the environment is to survive then it needs the organisation to provide it with essential services.

The systems approach can be considered as either open (organismic and adaptive) or closed (mechanistic). A closed system organisation uses only internal processes and interaction and is not dependent on external environment. Closed systems are oblivious to changes in the external environment and are not sensitive to any external deviations. Broom and Sha (2012: 155) describe the boundaries of a closed system as “impermeable”, that is, it does not allow the exchange of information with its environment. Managers in closed organisations operate independent of environmental forces (Plowman, 2013: 907). Open systems on the other hand tend to respond to changes within the environment. Open system organisations do not rely on internal processes and interaction alone but depend on other organisations/groups in the external environment. Such systems are adaptive to the external environment and see mutual interaction with the environment as key to survival. Organisations therefore focus on shared meaning and mutual understanding. Katz and Kahn (in Bowen, Rawlins & Martin, 2012: 50; Gregory, 2000: 267) state that an open system identifies the behaviour of an organisation by “mapping the repeated cycles of input, throughput, output, and feedback between an organisation and its publics.” Thus, movement of one affects the movement of another in predictable fashion. Organisations receive input from the environment either as information or in the form of resources and process them internally. This is then released into the environment (output) in an attempt to restore balance. Feedback is a key component of the open system as it allows an organisation to determine the success or otherwise of their attempts to maintain mutual understanding and make adjustment where necessary.

An organisation can therefore be described as open or closed depending on their level of sensitivity to their environments. Consequently, systems that are closed operate with a set of principles that meets goals and objectives while maintaining equilibrium, while organisations that practice an open system are responsive to the environment by adjusting and adapting as a means to maintain equilibrium. Organisations are part of social systems consisting of individuals or groups. They exist by accepting inputs

(identifying a problem with the publics), processing the information received (throughput), and transforming the inputs into outputs (organisations respond by sending messages to restore equilibrium). Organisations then receive feedback from the environment and make the necessary adjustment. The response from the environment determines whether the problem has been resolved. This concept of feedback is linked to *cybernetics*: communication that helps a source to control a receiver's behaviour (Smith, 2011). Smith (2014: 15) uses the term "linkages" to describe interaction between an organisation and its various publics. He identifies four linkage patterns that an organisation's publics can fit into: customers who use the product or service, producers who make it, enablers who create supportive conditions, and limiters who create negative conditions. Smith suggests that every public can fit into one of the linkages. The application of the systems theory demonstrates the importance of linkages between organisational departments and functions as well as the interdependence of organisations as a whole, and key stakeholders (Warnaby & Moss, 1997: 13).

2.2.4.1.1. Systems theory as applied to public relations

The systems approach provides a means by which PR practitioners can understand the relationship between an organisation and its environments/publics as well as the critical role that PR plays in an organisation. It attempts to explain how organisations interact with their publics (internal and external) and how the interactions are managed. Gregory (2004: 49) states that the systems theory serves as a tool for understanding the theoretical underpinning that relates to PR roles in an organisation. The theory stipulates that the well-being (or otherwise) of an organisation is largely dependent on the relationship it has with its internal and external environment. Spicer (1997: 57), in reviewing the definitions of PR, concludes that the modern conceptualisation of PR emanates, intentionally or not, from a systems perspective. In lieu of this he redefined PR as "an organisational function that helps a set of interdependent organisational units which work together to adapt to a changing environment." Smith (2016) suggests many of the issues that PR practitioners deal with are because of the closed systems approach that some organisations tend to use. Such issues arise when organisations:

- do not adapt or seek to adapt within their environment.

- do not hold themselves accountable to their publics and stakeholders.
- do not engage in transparent and/or timely communication.
- do not focus on customers and other publics.

However, an organisation is a social system that consists of individuals or groups, including suppliers, local communities, employees, customers, and governments who interact with it. This means that an organisation ought to operate an open system if it wants to be effective. PR therefore takes the role of being the link between the organisation and its environment thereby strengthening the relationship. PR in an open system is considered proactive as it anticipates, scans and monitors, detects issues, and initiates corrective measures.

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000: 149) state that the role of a PR practitioner is simply to help organisations adapt and adjust to changes in the organisation's environment, that is, by helping to achieve balance (homeostasis) between an organisation and its publics. This is done in two ways: 1) by maintaining interdependence between the organisation and its publics, 2) by monitoring the environment and alerting the organisation of the need to adapt (proactive) or respond (reactive).

Plowman (2013: 907) argues that although closed systems operators believe they are independent of external influences, they nevertheless have to cope with factors within their environment, especially in an increasingly turbulent environment. This means that closed systems can simply not ignore the environment. Plowman's assertion agrees with the views of McKee and Lamb (2009: 1) that no formal organisation is an island and organisations who think of themselves as having all the necessary resources to be on their own are too short sighted for success. Plowman concludes that the primary link in sustaining the interdependence between an organisation and its environment is PR.

In the application of the systems approach to PR, Grunig and Hunt (1984) suggest that the press agency model and public information is a reflection of the closed system. Communication tends to be one-way, outward from an organisation's stakeholders. This is corroborated by Dozier (1990: 8) when he points out that PR has traditionally functioned as though organisations were closed systems. Broom and Sha (2012: 159) further disclose that PR practice is a closed system when organisations react to situations rather than be proactive. PR programme planning and management are

based on the closed system and are only activated when disturbed. Practitioners concentrate on publicity or information spreading regardless of whether the outcome is beneficial to the publics or the organisation (Gregory, 2000: 226). Bell and Bell (cited in du Plessis 2000: 42), describe this type of PR practice as *functionary*. Such practitioners “attempt to preserve and promote a favourable image of the organisation” without considering the dynamics of changing the organisational environments (Dozier, 1990: 8). du Plessis (2000: 42) is of the view that such practices exist even today since some organisations still believe that publicity can be used as a measure for determining success of a programme. Functionaries produce programmes that tend to affect the environment instead of having a mutual effect. They however do not participate in any decision making, neither are they part of the dominant coalition. A functionary practitioner therefore performs the role of a *technician* whose primary responsibility is to prepare and produce communications. *Functional* practitioners on the other hand attempt to change both the organisation and the environment. There is a process of adaptation in the relationship between the organisation and its publics on the basis of reciprocal output-feedback adjustment.

Van Heerden (2004:39) states that the closed system forces the practitioner towards a technical role whose primary responsibilities are implementing decisions made by the dominant coalition. The purpose is to make communication output more effective and not necessarily make changes within the environment (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000: 243). In the open systems approach, practitioners are concerned with inputs received such as public opinion and information from a variety of publics, communication and throughputs such as the internal communication process and views of employees, and advise on and monitor the communication and reputation outputs of the system (Mackay, 2009: 58). The output eventually shapes how the organisation is viewed and rated by the external publics. McKee and Lamb (2009: 2) put it succinctly when they say that PR can only be practiced effectively through an open systems approach. That is to say, building mutually beneficial relationship based on a balanced flow of information from, and to the organisation and its key publics underlies the maintenance of an open system. An open system in PR is thus a proactive effort.

Within the systems theory, PR is seen as playing a *boundary spanning* role by serving as a link between the organisation and the external stakeholders. This role is considered critical for the PR professional as he is responsible for the provision of information about the organisation to the environment as well as bringing information about the environment back to the organisation. PR practitioners serve as the go-betweens by interpreting the publics to management and vice versa. Through consistent monitoring and scanning of the environment, with one foot in the organisation and one foot outside, they are able to advise the 'dominant coalition' about issues or opportunities in the environment and assist the coalition in responding effectively to these changes (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 9). From the perspective of White and Dozier (1992: 93), boundary spanners are "individuals within the organization who frequently interact with the organization's environment and who gather, select, and relay information from the environment to decision makers in the dominant coalition." Reddi (2009: 93) gives a simple description of boundary spanners as "exchange agents between the organisation and its environment", who perform three key functions: information gathering, information processing, and information feeding of the external environment. Practitioners play the management role in the open system and are seen as part of the 'dominant coalition'. Being part of management allows practitioners to gather information about key stakeholders through the use of formal and informal research techniques. Knowledge of key stakeholder opinions and attitudes allow the practitioner to develop strategic plans that bridge the gap between the organisation and its publics (Gregory, 2010: 7; Reddi, 2009: 93; Van Heerden, 2004: 39).

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000: 243) are of the view that the application of the open systems theory to PR means deliberate monitoring of the environment in order to anticipate and detect changes that affect the relationship between the organisation and its publics. This calls for practitioners to be sensitive to issues that affect publics. This also means having the research skills to monitor publics, and other environmental forces both within and outside of the organisation. Spicer (1997: 57) acknowledges the importance of the theory to PR practice in three ways:

- Previously organisations were much concerned with studying an organisation by largely focusing on the internal workings of the organisation. Systems

Theory moved this locus to a focus on the interdependence of an organisation and its environment.

- Systems Theory guides research and theorising in scientific communities. This theory is very prominent in the PR definitions, and the understanding of the concept is encapsulated by an emerging organisational view of the field through the General Systems Theory (Grunig, 1992; Pavlik, 1987 in Spicer, 1997). PR concepts such as boundary spanning activities and adaptation to the environment reflect a General Systems Theory approach.
- The systems Theory serves as a useful heuristic tool in assisting the PR function to conceptualise the complex nature of organisational interdependencies. It also provides a framework for thinking about aspects of importance in understanding organisational PR decision-making and effectiveness. This type of thinking provides individuals with an understanding of the world as an interconnected whole.

Steyn (2001: 24) also indicates that the systems approach is ideal for developing the 'strategist' role. According to Steyn, various elements involved in the systems approach, input, throughput, output, and feedback, bind the environment with the organisation and this process is facilitated by the PR practitioner. Dozier (in Grunig, 1992: 352) indicates that the systems theory addresses the many roles played by the PR practitioner. It allows practitioners to understand the need to adapt to an increasingly unstable and threatening environment.

2.2.4.1.2. Linking the systems theory to the study

The financial services sector consists of organisations with communications departments that are considered key to the success of the organisation. The work of the PR department of such institutions will greatly influence the bigger system, i.e. the organisation. Eventually, the activities of a practitioner will influence how financial institutions are seen in general. This will in turn influence how the practice of PR in other sectors is viewed. The level of interdependency between the financial institutions and the organisation and the role that PR plays in the communication between the two ultimately determines the kind of PR that is practiced in the financial sector and the models used in this practice.

2.2.4.2. Relationship management theory

As discussed earlier in the relational paradigm (2.2.2.2), 'relationship', at least from the North American perspective, is at the core of PR (although this is disputed by the Europeans in the raging debate as to whether PR is about communication or relationship). Grunig (2015: xxiii) for instance argues that "relationships have always been the elephant in the room for both public relations practice and theory." Grunig further argues that "in order to have the PR valued inside organisations, the PR practitioners must be capable of demonstrating that their efforts are playing a part in reaching the objectives of these organisations by building long-term behavioural relationships with strategic publics" (1993: 138). Grunig accuses PR professionals and scholars of being overly preoccupied with media portrayals, public opinion, image, reputation, brand, and persuasion while failing to realise that PR provides value to organisations, publics, and societies through relationships.

The sentiments of scholars such as James Grunig shows how strongly the concept of PR as based on relationships with communication as a tool for promoting that relationship is viewed. The theory reflects the growing concern in PR for managing the relationship between an organisation and its publics (Heath & Coombs, 2006: 202). Relationship management implies mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its stakeholders, which are developed and expanded over time. This is reflected in some of the definitions of PR. Ledingham (2003) for instance defined PR as "the effective and efficient management of organizational-public relationships, based on common interests and shared goals, over time, to engender mutual understanding and mutual benefit" (2003: 184). Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000: 6) described it as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends." Heath (2013: 781) describes the concept of relationship management to mean steps involved in the management of the relationship between the organisation and its publics for mutual benefits. The concept of *relationship* was defined by Ledingham as "the state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either can impact the economic, social, cultural, or political well-being of the other" (2003: 184). PR is therefore used as a strategic resource to manage relationships with communication as a tool. The quality of the

relationship is used as a measure to determine the success or failure of PR (Heath, 2013: 558).

The idea of linking PR to relationship management is not a new thing. Ferguson (in Chandler, 2014; Grunig, 2015: xxiii) in 1984 became the first scholar to advocate for PR theory based on relationships rather than the organisation, the publics, or the communication process. Since then, it has been the subject of PR research among various scholars (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000, Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Grunig, 1992; Ehling, 1992; Broom & Dozier, 1990).

The concept of relationship is based on exchange that must benefit both sides if it is to be maintained. Communication is used as a 'strategic management function' to manage the relationship with key publics that affect the mission, goals, and objectives of the organisation (Dozier, 1995: 85). Heath and Coombs (2006: 202) articulate that the theory emanated from four key developments in PR: i) realisation that public relationships are central to PR, ii) view of PR as a management function, iii) the identification of key dimensions of the organisational-public relationship, and iv) construction of models of the organisational-public relationship. By focusing on relationship as the domain of PR, PR is not seen solely for its strategic functions, but as an essential tool for building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with publics who are instrumental in the achievement of the organisation's goals. Ledingham measured relationships based on three categories, namely interpersonal relationship (personal interactions between the organisation's representatives and the public), professional (delivery of professional services to publics), and community (support for community concerns) (2005: 741). Ledingham further identified 10 principles that, he says, should be used to build relationship: the essence of PR is relationships, a successful relationship benefits the organisation and its publics, the organisational-public relationship is dynamic, wants and needs drive the relationships, effective relationships increase understanding between organisation and publics, quality of relationship determines success or failure of organisational-public management, communication is a strategic tool in relationship management, relationship is influenced by relational history, nature of interactions, frequency of exchange, and reciprocity, relationships are based on categorisation, and relationship building is applicable to all aspects of PR (2005: 742-743).

Grunig (2002: 1) suggests that relationships need to be measured as a means of establishing the value and status of PR in management science literature. Grunig (2002: 1) believes that organisations must test the health of relationships to demonstrate the value of PR as a management function. However, this is not simple as there is no single indicator for measuring OPR. Ledingham and Bruning (2000: 67) therefore suggested the “need to develop a scale that includes several measures of each of the relationship dimensions to ensure greater reliability.” Broom et al (1997: 95) also state that “to truly measure the properties of relationships, researchers must develop relationships as phenomena distinct from the perception held by parties in the relationships.”

Ferguson (in Jo, 2003) suggested a number of categories to measure OPR: dynamic versus closed, open versus closed, mutual satisfaction, distribution of power and mutual understanding, agreement, and consensus. Grunig and Ehling (1992:83) suggested reciprocity, trust, credibility, mutual legitimacy openness, mutual satisfaction, and mutual understanding, while Ledingham, Bruning, Thomlison and Lesko (1997), after a review of extensive literature from various disciplines, came up with 17 indicators for measuring OPR: investment, commitment, trust, comfort with relational dialectics, cooperation, mutual goals, interdependence, power imbalance, performance satisfaction, comparison level of the alternatives, adaptation, non-retrievable investment, shared technology, summative constructs, structural bonds, social bonds, intimacy, and passion. Ledingham and Bruning (in Jo, 2003: 18) subsequently provided five OPR indicators: open communication, the level of trust, the level of involvement, investment in the communities, and long-term commitment. Huang (1997) proposed four key indicators for measuring relationships between organisations and their publics: trust, control mutuality, relational commitment, and relational satisfaction. Huang (2001) later included cultural elements of face and favour. Hon and Grunig (in Hung-Besacke & Chen, 2013) developed two indicators which they added to the indicators developed by Huang: communal and exchange relationships. Hon and J. Grunig’s (1999) measurement indicators have been adopted in various studies on OPR (Ni, 2009; Ki & Hon, 2007; Hung, 2006, 2002; Hon & Brunner, 2002; Brunner, 2000).

The measurement of OPR is summarised in the table below:

Table: 2.2. Frameworks for organisational-public relationship measurement

Author(s)	Relationship dimensions	Sample and organisational-public setting
Ferguson, 1984	Dynamic versus static, open versus closed, mutual satisfaction, distribution of power, mutual understanding, mutual agreement	
J. Grunig & Ehling	Reciprocity, trust, credibility, mutual legitimacy, openness, mutual satisfaction, and mutual understanding	
Huang, 1997	Trust, control mutuality, relational commitment, relational satisfaction	311 legislative members and their assistants, 16 items (1997)
Ledingham & Bruning, 1988	Openness, trust, involvement, investment, commitment	384 residential telephone subscribers, 91 items (1998)
Hon & J. Grunig, 1999	Trust, control mutuality, commitment, satisfaction, communal relationships, exchange relationships	200 online users with 52 items (1999)
J. Grunig & Huang, 2000	Trust, control mutuality, commitment, satisfaction	311 legislative members and their assistants, 16 items (1997)
Huang, 2001	Trust, control mutuality, commitment, satisfaction, face and favour	1st stage: 311 legislative members and their assistants, 16 items (1997) 2nd stage: 235 public relations practitioners from Executive Yuan in Taiwan, 21 items
Kim, 2001	Trust, commitment, local and community involvement, reputation	1st stage: 160 undergraduate students, 58 items 2nd stage: 102 community residents, 16 items 3rd stage: 157 customers of online company, 16 items

Adapted from S. Jo (2003): Measurement of organization-public relationships: validation of measurement using a manufacturer-retailer relationship.

The relationship theory has been applied to various studies in PR including crisis management, customer-service providers, and symbolic and behavioural influences of employee volunteerism, relationship cultivation and maintenance, and its effects on

an organisation's reputation (Brønn, 2007; Ki & Hon, 2006; Hung, 2006, 2004; Rhee, 2004; Coombs, 2000; Wilson, 2000; Ledingham & Bruning, 2001, 1998). Studies (Coombs, 2000; Kim & Lee, 2005; Park & Reber, 2011, in Hung Beseack & Chen, 2013: 227) show that a "positive OPR plays a significant role in an organisation's reputation during the time of a crisis." Huang (2008) concludes that OPR can be regarded as a subjective reality, objective reality, or both. Perception of relationship will therefore affect how a specific incident or event that an organisation experiences is perceived.

2.2.4.2.1 Linking the relationship management theory to the study

PR practiced in the financial services sector is mostly based on maintaining relationship with clients/publics. In the financial services sector, especially the banks, relationships are considered very important. The organisations within this sector have relationship managers whose duties, among other things, primarily include satisfying the needs of the publics and thereby maintaining existing relationships. The Relationship Management Theory is significant to this study as it enables PR practitioners to show their value to the organisation by managing and measuring relationships. The practitioner is therefore at the centre of the OPR.

2.2.5. Public relations as practiced in the financial services sector

A review of available literature shows there is a lack of publication in as far as PR and communications management in the financial services sector is concerned. The few available studies focus on the banking industry. Africa is once again missing in this area of discussion as there appears to very little or no discussion of PR practice in the financial services sector. This feeds into assertions by scholars such as Skinner (2011), Rensburg and Van Heerden (2005) that the attempt to develop a common body of knowledge, especially a global model, on the practice of PR cannot be fully appreciated until it is linked with how the profession is practiced in other cultures such as Africa. If a country such as Ghana is to catch up with other countries on the continent, especially South Africa, which has contributed so much to the body of knowledge with regards to PR in Africa, there will be the need to assess how the profession is practiced, what models practitioners use, and the various variables that inform the practice of PR. Ghana clearly lags behind, both at the academic and

professional level, in the attempt by Africa to contribute to the global discussion on developing a common framework that can be applied to all countries in as far as PR and communications management is concerned.

Several factors since the beginning of the 21st century, including the global economic scandals, the highly competitive environment, and trust issues, have greatly shaped the financial services industry. Sahin (2015) points to the intersection of four industry-specific dynamics that pose a challenge to communication within the financial services sector: lack of trust in financial institutions due to the financial crisis, the conservative nature of the industry, the importance of trust and relationships in transactions, and the ever-increasing oversight from policymakers and regulators. Moreover, studies across several countries show trust and a good reputation remain major issues in the financial sector (De Chernatony & Cottam, 2006; Breton & Cote, 2006; Hall, 2005). These studies found that the financial sector has been unable to strategically manage its relationship with its key publics. The financial sector has therefore become sensitive to its current outlook and adjusted the way it approaches business as a means of invigorating its adaptation to the business environment and in so doing enhance its relationship with its stakeholders (García & Garraza, 2010: 180).

PR on the other hand is considered a key tool in influencing stakeholder views of an organisation and successfully promoting organisational goals. Sandin and Simolin (2006: 11) articulate that the nature of the financial sector means that credibility and trust cannot be taken for granted and this is often reflected in extensive PR activities engaged in as a means of monitoring and managing reputation. PR plays an essential role in the financial sector as it provides the opportunity for organisations to interact with their publics. Simply put, PR functions within service firms such as the financial firms are perceived as relationship functions. García and Gazarra (2010: 196) acknowledge the inseparable nature of strategic communication and organisational excellence. They found that organisations within the financial sector are now operating with a more “inclusive” policy. The authors conclude that communication plays a key internal role in an ‘inclusive’ process thus ensuring that decisions made are based on empirical data gathered through research from both the internal and external environment. simply put, financial organisations are now practicing two-way symmetrical communication with the intention of achieving trust and influencing reputation with key publics. Sandin and Simolin (2006: 59) found that Swedish banks

do not identify their activities as PR but nevertheless utilise it highly. The activities of these banks are primarily aimed at building and maintaining relationships. Most importantly PR is seen as crucial to the success of the organisations and is thus placed at the top management level. This conforms to Grunig's belief that PR should be part of strategic management. Uduji (2013: 76) is also of the opinion that PR in the financial sector has two main objectives: firstly, to establish and secure mutual understanding and cooperation with three essential sections of the public - customers, shareholders, and employees, and secondly, to promote the services and products of the institution in a highly competitive business environment. This calls for PR professionals in the financial services sector to be creative and engaging in an environment that traditionally does not allow such a thing (Sahin, 2015).

From the above submission, it is clear that PR play a crucial role in the financial services sector. PR promotes the activities of the organisation while building the reputation of the organisation. Its role in ensuring restoration of confidence and trust is essential if the financial sector is to survive the turmoil it currently finds itself in, especially in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

2.3. SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the theoretical conceptualisations that underpin the practice of PR including a variety of issues such as some of the worldviews that conceptualise PR practice. The discussion started by looking at the attempt to develop a global model that captures how PR is practiced across cultures and the seeming difficulties associated with the discussions. One of the key issues discussed in the chapter was the concept of worldviews and paradigms. A myriad of definitions were examined and the differences/argument for or against clearly delineated. The argument as to whether the term 'worldview' and 'paradigm' were the same or different was also discussed. After a review of the various arguments, the researcher concluded that the two concepts appear to mean the same thing although some authors agree that 'worldview' is a higher concept or a bigger umbrella under which paradigms exist. The chapter also discussed the meta-theory and theories as applicable to the study.

Most of the worldviews looked at were based on western perspectives which, some believe, might not work in different cultures such as Africa. In lieu of this the chapter discussed what is termed the 'African worldview', which is strongly linked with the

concept of Africans as social beings. The African worldview, as the discussion showed, is premised on the philosophy of 'Ubuntu', which emphasises communalism and collectivism rather than individualism and individual rights, which is more akin to that of Europe and America. The business environment in Africa is greatly influenced by societal values and influences and this cannot be ignored in the effort to understand the factors that influence PR practice on the continent. The discussion on worldviews was concluded with a look at the seeming similarities between the African worldview and the symmetrical worldview/paradigm. The chapter discussed three key paradigms: relational, reflective, and two-way symmetrical and concluded with a discussion on the general Excellence Theory as a meta-theory.

Two main theories which served as the foundation for the study were outlined in this chapter. The researcher first discussed the systems theory which deals with the interdependence and interconnectedness of an organisation and its internal and external environment. Here PR was viewed as part of a general subsystem that links the organisation to its environment. PR was seen as playing a crucial role in how an organisation is effectively run. The theory allows practitioners to understand the relationship between an organisation and its environment and thus practitioners are able to fashion the appropriate strategies to maintain the mutual link between the organisation and its environment. The relationship management theory on the other hand shows how PR thrives on relationship building. The theory posits that PR is about maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and its publics. Relationship building is however facilitated by communication. When PR is practiced based on relationship, it drives business success.

The chapter concludes with a look at PR as practiced within the financial services sector. Here the lack of literature on PR practice in Africa, Ghana and the sector were clearly outlined. It was realised that the few research studies in this area focused mainly on the banking sector, although there are other organisations within the sector such as insurance, micro-finance etc. This calls for a broader discussion in order to improve the body of knowledge in some of these areas, especially at a time when the financial services sector is facing an issue of trust and good reputation as a result of the economic crisis. PR does, however, play a critical role in managing the reputation and increasing trust of customers in a sector that is riddled with suspicion, credibility issues, and mistrust.

The next chapter will examine the historical development and practice of PR and how it shapes the practice as it is seen today. A variety of perspectives will be discussed including the North American perspectives and the European perspectives. The discussion will then look at the practice of the profession in terms of the roles (with a focus on the technician and managerial roles) and conclude with an examination of the development of the practice in Africa and Ghana in particular.

CHAPTER THREE

DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to investigate the practice of public relations (PR) among selected corporate organisations in Ghana, especially in the financial services sector. The research seeks to determine the models and roles that underpin the practice of PR. The result will lead to the development of a framework that will guide the practice of PR in the financial services sector. To develop an effective framework that guides the practice of PR, it will be essential to recognise how modern PR developed. The content of this chapter is based on the second part of the first research objective, which is *to investigate how PR is practiced by means of literature review*. The discussion will be in two phases. The first phase will focus on the historical development of PR from three perspectives, namely the North America, European and African perspectives. The second phase will examine the practice of PR from the models and roles perspectives. The practice of PR in these three continents differs due to a number of factors and these will be explored. In Africa in particular, one of the key elements that shape Africans is their culture. Since the cultural environment affects the overall behaviour of Africans, it cannot be delineated from the practice of PR. In view of this, the chapter will explore how culture affects PR in Africa. The chapter will then conclude by looking at the historical development of PR practice in Ghana.

3.2. ORIGIN OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Much has been written about the origin of PR. Van Heerden (2004:51) suggests a disagreement among scholars on the exact origin of PR. Butterick (2011:8) also points to the lack of a single history of PR's development worldwide but a conglomeration of different and unrelated PR histories. Butterick further suggests that the fact that most of the research on the history and development of PR was conducted in USA is problematic as one cannot rely or make conclusions on the history of PR that is concentrated on a single country. Again, focusing on the history and development of PR from one country could result in the belief that PR can be

practiced in one way with one set of values while ignoring the contributions of other countries, cultures, and traditions.

Lubbe (in Ferreira, 2003: 147) is of the view that the history of PR can be viewed from two perspectives; systems or structural. The systems perspective of PR history focuses on the socio-economic development of a society while the structural perspective views the history of PR from the era of professionalism, including the formation of professional bodies, codes of conduct, accreditation etc. The history of PR is thus viewed from two main perspectives, namely the systems approach, which deals with the antecedent to PR development, and the structural approach, that is, PR as practiced in contemporary times.

Literature shows a general agreement among scholars that modern PR practice has its root in ancient civilisation. Cutlip et al (2000: 102) put it succinctly:

The communication of information to influence viewpoints or actions can be traced from the earliest civilisations. Archaeologists found a farm bulletin in Iraq that told the farmers of 1800 BC how to sow their crops, how to irrigate. Public relations was used many centuries ago in England, where king's maintained Lord Chancellors as 'keepers of the king's conscience.'

Lattimore et al (2004: 26) also suggest that the antecedent to PR started with public speakers (or rhetoricians), press agents and other promoters. Their job consisted of providing communication services, including serving as spokespersons for clients, writing speeches, training clients in persuasive communication skills, and answering challenging questions. Many other authors (Wilcox, Cameron & Reber, 2015; Heath, 2013; Edwards, 2009; Wilcox, 2006; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009) have traced the history of modern PR or the practice of using communication as a tool to influence public opinion to the ancient empires of Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and India. Heath (2013: 29) for instance, postulates that the forerunner to modern PR was birthed out of a plethora of historical activities and was associated with the concept of *propaganda*. Historical events show that powerful institutions including governments, monarchs, religious institutions, particularly the Catholic Church, tended to use communication and information as a means of generating support for their cause or attract and keep

faithful converts (Grunig & Hunt 1984; Cutlip et al 2000). Rhetoricians such as Plato and Leontinium used persuasive skills to influence public opinion. These scholars believed that the job of a rhetorician is to use persuasive skills to determine the truth or otherwise of arguments and claims. Public opinion was very essential in the determination of issues whether large or small in classical Athens (Lattimore et al 2004: 26). The authors further pointed to the actions of Lady Godiva, Martin Luther and the reformations, and the adventures of conquistadores seeking El Dorado as examples of PR activities. The creation of the Congregatio de Propaganda in the 17th century by the Roman Catholic Church (the congregation for propagating the faith) is pointed to as a crucial element in the development of PR.

Bernays and other historians also believed that the practice of modern professional PR has always gone hand in hand with civilisation. For them, most of the events of the past can be interpreted as PR. Although some societies mainly ruled through fear and intimidation, others who were more advanced used the elements of discussion and debates to try and achieve compromises. Scholars and rulers of ancient civilisation including Sumeria, Babylonia, Assyria, and Persia, depended on poems and other writings to promote their achievement in the field of battle and politics (Bates, 2002: 6). Wilcox, Cameron and Reber (2015: 66) suggests that strategies and techniques such as interpersonal communication, speeches, art, literature, staged events, and publicity were used as a means of influencing public opinion and accepting authority of governments and religion. Although the idea of PR had not developed then, these actions were common to what is associated with modern PR today. Herodotus noted that the Greeks curved messages on stones close to watering holes to demoralise the Ionian fleet during the Persian wars. Alexander the Great also publicised his victories on the battlefield by sending 'glowing' reports back to the Macedonian Court. The Egyptian pharaohs used the Rosetta Stone, dating back to 196 B.C., to espouse their achievements while ancient Olympic games were used as a channel to promote athletes as heroes. In Ancient Rome, Julius Caesar is reported to have published a book, *Commentaries*, which he used to further his ambitions to become the emperor of the Roman Empire. Caesar published a daily paper *Acta Diurna* ('Daily Acts' or 'Daily records'), which were records of public proceedings as a means of influencing public opinion. The history of PR is said to have strongly influenced the spread of Christianity

at the height of the Roman Empire. This is reflected in the argument of Grunig and Hunt (1984: 15):

The apostles Paul and Peter used speeches, letters, staged events, and similar public relations activities to attract attention, gain followers, and establish new churches. Similarly, the four gospels in the New Testament, which were written at least 40 years after the death of Jesus, were public relations documents, written more to propagate the faith than to provide a historical account of Jesus' life.

Grunig and Hunt suggest that the early apostles of the New Testament era used these techniques as a form of “Christian Messianic Communication,” and as a result gained followers, swayed opinions, and impacted their society greatly. This assertion is further corroborated by Smith (2014: 40-43) who outlines the use of persuasive techniques by various religious leaders, especially key players in the Old and New Testament era, to influence public opinion. The statements by Grunig and Hunt as well as Smith show that persuasive communication or PR then was mainly one way and based on the press agency and public information model. The desire to promote the cause of Christianity and Jesus can be likened to the press agency concept. Information passed on was also believed to be an accurate description of events as witnessed and testified to by the apostles. This is also a reflection of the information model, which, though premised on accuracy, is still a one-way mode of communication. The four gospels for example relied on interpretation and audience segmentation to present four different versions of the same story to appeal to the interests, experiences and needs of four different audiences. The idea was to increase interest in Jesus, garner more supporters for the new religious movement and sustain morale and order in the church (Smith, 2014: 41). Clearly, these techniques reflect some of the current practices of today's PR.

From the brief description of the antecedent to modern PR history, it is obvious that the concept of PR is not a new thing, as Lee (2009: 8) puts it: “*the practice of using communication to influence the public is hundreds of years old, with its roots in ancient civilisation...*” Heath (2013: 30) also adds that “Although lost in time or unknown because of the limitations of travel, many roots of public relations were well established by Persian kings and the kings and emperors of China, Japan, and Korea.” Heath

further posits that these kings used refined pageantry, sponsorship of inventions, poetry, announcements about agricultural advice and technology, and scholarship as well as military displays to influence public opinion. PR is an essential part of human communication and has influenced social, political, and economic situations. Smith (2008) adds that the concept of PR has been a critical and natural part of society. Smith further notes that PR has been part of different cultural and social settings and only separated by miles and centuries. Smith (2008) concludes that social interactions, then and now, contain elements of PR including information, persuasion, reconciliation and cooperation. Literature therefore clearly shows that the idea of PR, although not named as such then, was and still is, part of human society.

The brief discussion above shows that the antecedent of PR is rooted in history and ancient civilisation. Indeed, there are many more examples that can be cited to show that PR as it is today has its roots in ancient civilisation. However, that is not the focus of this chapter. The discussion now focuses on the development of modern PR from various perspectives.

3.2.1. North American development of public relations

Literature traces the origin of modern PR to the USA. Most of the publications on PR, especially on the history of the profession have come from American scholars (Cutlip et al 2000; Center et al 2015; Butterick, 2011; Seitel, 2007; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). L'Etang (2008a: 328) however, decries the tendency of American scholars to constantly assume that PR was developed in the USA and later transferred to other countries. The focus of the history from the American perspective is seen mostly through the works of key institutions and figures such as Ivy Lee, P.T. Barnum and Edward Bernays, who are deemed crucial in shaping the definition and practice of PR today (Lee, 2009: 9). Literature links the history of PR in America to the early days of the colonial settlements. Publicity and PR techniques were used to attract settlers and promote various institutions. Harvard College is reputed to have established the first systemic fundraising campaign by designing a fundraising brochure and sending representatives to England to raise funds. Between 1745 and 1775 other colleges similarly used promotional brochures, special events, lotteries, and cultivated wealthy donors as a means of raising funds (Wilcox et al 2015: 69; Lattimore et al 2004: 26).

The widespread use of PR in the US was however felt in politics during the American War of Independence. A number of strategies including events, agenda setting (mainly premised on the promotion of particular topics in an attempt to influence issues the media covered), oratory, pamphlets, slogans, symbols, meetings and development of long term campaigns, were used to incite the citizens against British rule. These included Samuel Adams, Tom Paine, Benjamin Franklin and Adams Hamilton. Adams, for instance, was labelled as the great press agent of the American Revolution (Wilcox et al 2015: 69; Bates, 2006: 7). The 1800s consequently saw PR as a viable profession mainly dominated by press agency and political communication (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005: 421). Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (2013: 23-44) divide the history of PR in the USA into five main stages:

Table 3.1. Stages of PR development in the United States

Stages of PR in USA	PR historical highlights in USA
Stages 1: Preliminary development of channels of communication Development of PR tactics such as publicity, promotion, press agency	1600 -1799 Initial colonisation American Revolution
Stage 2: Communication/initiating Era of publicists, press agents, promoters, propagandists	1800 – 1899 Civil War Western expansion Industrial revolution
Stage 3: Reacting/preventing Writers hired as spokespersons PR organised on behalf of people with special interest	1900 - 1939 PR in a progressive era Muckrakers World War I Era of depression
Stage 4: Planning/preventing PR reaches maturity Incorporated as a management function	1940 - 1979 Period of World War II Cold War of the 1950s Consumer movements
Stage 5: Professionalism Control over use and practice of PR on an international level Development of a body of knowledge, code of ethics, PR education	1980 - present Professionalism Global communication

Source: Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg (2013: 28)

As the table above illustrates, Newsom et al (2013) attributes the beginning of PR to the early years of American colonisation as well as during the American Revolution. various communication tactics such as publicity, newsletters, newspapers, heroes, slogans, rhetoric, rallies, parades, brochures etc. were used to promote the fight for independence and the revolution (2013: 27-28). The period between 1800 and 1899

was referred to as the era of press agency and publicity. This period saw the use of PR as a political tool by the American government and activists to sway public opinion. Propaganda increased during this period and publicists such as Amos Kendall wrote speeches and pamphlets, prepared strategies, conducted polls, and advised the then American president, Andrew Jackson, on his public image. The 1850s also saw the use of polling by activists for strategic planning and publicity. PR was used in political campaigns and political activists made use of newspapers, pamphlets, fliers, and campaign press bureaus in political campaigns. Agitators also used publicity to help change the thinking of the American people. They appealed to public sentiments, got newspapers to endorse their efforts, formed editorial alliances to extend the reach of their messages and give them credibility and prestige. The era of the Civil War witnessed what became known as the fund drive, a practice where PR was used to raise funds for military purposes. PR was used in the development of the USA as various activists engaged in publicity techniques to sell lands in the western part of America. This also coincided with the development of industry as technological advancement led to the Industrial Revolution. But it was not just in the business environment that PR manifested itself; the entertainment industry was also influenced by publicity stunts. PR tactics and techniques started progressing from the 1900s to the late 1930s. Organisations hired people, most of whom were journalists, to be their spokespersons while press bureaus were established by various governments mainly to engage in propaganda, especially during the World War 1 (WWI). PR was used to influence public opinion, especially by a number of US presidents.

Newsom et al (2013: 37-44) further note that PR reached its maturity during the 1940s. PR grew and became a management function. It was used extensively during World War II (WWII) and unlike in WWI, PR this time was more sophisticated, well-coordinated and integrated. PR is believed to have developed into a fully-fledged profession during WWII. The first school of public relations was established during this time. The growth of consumer scepticism in the 1960s also coincided with the growth of PR. The tactics and techniques were refined to gain credibility. This period also saw the influx of women into the profession. The final stage, as outlined by Newsom et al was the era of professionalism. This period was known as the era of global communication. This period realised acquisition of PR firms and mergers of PR and advertising agencies. These agencies expanded their operations into other countries

largely due to globalisation. PR expanded as the techniques and tactics continued to be shaped by efforts to engage in mutual understanding between organisations and stakeholders. The advancement of ICT presented new opportunities as well as challenges for practitioners. PR practice became more scientific as associations engaged in various research studies in the effort to improve the practice and give further legitimacy to the profession. Efforts to improve the body of knowledge increased tremendously as PR became more ethical and socially responsible. The number of universities offering courses in PR also increased worldwide. The authors conclude by acknowledging the continuing and increasing sophistication of PR practice across the world.

Aranoff and Baskin (in Ferreira, 2003: 148) also divided the historical development of PR in USA into three major phases: *Manipulation* - this was mostly associated with press agent techniques of the 19th century; *Information* - this era was characterised by numerous publicity activities at the beginning of the 20th century, and *Mutual influence and understanding* - PR was categorised as a management function in its modern form. The most popular of these stages however comes from the publication of Grunig and Hunt's famous book *Managing Public Relations* in 1984. Grunig and Hunt (1984) identified four stages in the development of PR in the USA: Press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetric communications, and two-way symmetric communications.

The emergence of Ivy Ledbetter Lee shaped the way PR was practiced. Lee helped in the development of the many techniques and principles that still shape the practice today. Lee believed that communication with the media must be transparent as he felt that good publicity was key to understanding good corporate performance. Lee argued that if organisations are to positively influence public opinion it was important for these organisations to build bridges with the public. Lee was of the view that the key to winning public support was to be honest, accurate, and open, which he formalised in his famous *Declaration of Principles* in 1906. Part of the Declaration read:

In brief, our plan is, frankly and openly, on behalf of the business concerns and public institutions, to supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which it is of value and interest to the public to know about."

Lee therefore sought to establish publicity as based on openness and honesty. Public information based on transparency is likely to endear organisations, which were facing harsh public opinion due to their perceived negative behaviour, to positive public reviews. The declaration meant that a positive reputation can only be gained by providing accurate information to those who need it. Seitel (2007) describes Lee as the one who actually ushered in 21st century PR practice and hence should be regarded as the founding father of 20th century PR.

The 1920s witnessed a shift from the practice of PR as publicity to a more scientific approach. Edward Bernays, regarded by many as the father of modern PR, was one of the key proponents of this new approach. Bernays, whose work was heavily influenced by social psychology, emphasised on the idea of “scientific persuasion”. Bernays argued that the development of PR campaigns and messages can only achieve the purpose of shaping perception and influencing positive behaviour if backed by scientific research and behavioural psychology. He posited that PR should be viewed as an art with a scientific background. In 1923 Bernays wrote the very first book on PR titled *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, which indicated the scope, function, methods, techniques, and social responsibilities of a PR counsel. He suggested that the public could be effectively persuaded if the messages of organisations supported the values and interest of these publics. To Bernays, PR was more or less synonymous with propaganda, which he referred to as “the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses.” Bernays (in Wilcox et al 2015: 79) defined PR as the “science of creating circumstances, mounting events that are calculated to stand out as newsworthy, yet at the same time do not appear to be staged.” Bernays wrote severally about the profession of PR and its ethical responsibilities including advocating the need to licence PR counsellors thus earning the description as “the first and doubtless the leading ideologist of public relations”.

Other pioneers who were known to have contributed immensely to the shaping of public relations in the USA included Arthur Page, Franklin Roosevelt, Rex Harlow etc. Lee and Bernays are nevertheless regarded as the most prominent pioneers in the field of PR.

Whereas modern PR in America developed rapidly, the same cannot be said of how the profession developed in other countries. In Europe attempts to codify the body of

literature on PR did not occur till the late 1990s. The next section discusses the development of PR from the European perspective.

3.2.2. Historical development of public relations in Europe

Nessman (1995: 152) suggests that PR in Europe (although the Europeans prefer the term communication management) developed concurrently but independently of that of the USA. Nessman however, concedes that many ideas on the professionalism of PR and the practice in Europe had their roots in America. Unlike the USA, PR in Europe developed slowly (Newsom et al 2000: 31). Verčič (2000: 342) attributes the differences in the development of PR in the two continents to environmental and economic differences that resulted from the two world wars. Several authors have written about the development of PR in many European countries. L'Etang (2008: 319), in reviewing the history of PR, suggests that development of PR theory has been largely affected due to the fact that most historical analysis of PR tends to be premised on the "four models" which is US biased. L'Etang contends that this is not appropriate as models cannot be appropriately applied to cultures with different paths of historical evolution. Raaz and Wehmeier (2011: 256) also posit that modern PR is a product of modernity and modernity itself has its roots in Europe. They conclude that it will be erroneous for anyone to suggest a single unified history of PR.

It is widely believed that PR in Europe began in the 19th century, after WWII. Carl Hundhausen, a German, was reported to have first used the term PR in 1937 when he wrote an article on "Public Relations". Nessman (2000: 213), on the other hand, cites documentary evidence that shows PR actually started as far back as the 18th century. Documents available point to Frederick the Great's (1712-86) efforts to improve his foreign policy by distributing favourable news while suppressing negative news. Napoleon is also reported to have used a mobile printing press while on his military campaigns. He set up a news office that actively provided information as well as scanned foreign newspapers every day, which is similar to what has come to be known as press clippings/cuttings. In Germany, an industrial giant, Krups, is believed to have set up a department in 1870 dedicated to press relations (Watson, 2012: 43). There are other examples of businesses and state institutions in Europe that engaged in communication activities within the first 30 years of the 20th century. Activities of scholars such as Wuttke (1866), Kellen (1908), and Max Weber (1910) provide

evidence of PR prior to WWII. The communicative activities that took place before and during the war were based on social criticism and scientific debates. After the war, Hundhausen and Oeckle, two practitioners who are believed to have shaped the practice of PR in Germany, hence earning the accolade 'fathers of German PR', continued to encourage discussion on PR as a concept thereby enhancing its development theoretically and in terms of practice. It is believed that the development of PR theory has strong European influence. For instance, Bernays, who is a nephew of Sigmund Freud, is believed to have been influenced by the work of Freud while developing his PR works.

Nessman (1995: 152) suggests that although American practice and designation was adopted in Europe, this does not mean the development of PR in Europe is linked to that of the history of PR in the USA. European scholars agree that although professionalisation of PR started in the USA and some of the ideas and approaches were eventually adopted in Europe, nevertheless PR theory and practice between the two continents developed independently of each other. The influence of PR theory between the two continents has been mutual. For example, the ideas of Jurgen Habermas, a German sociologist, were used widely in the USA. PR theory development was heavily influenced by his teachings on symmetrical communications, discourse, mutual understanding, dialogue and consensus building, which are all key concepts in the definition of PR (Nessman, 1995: 153).

The mid-twentieth century witnessed a growth in the development of PR in Europe as national associations of PR started springing up. Finland was the first country in Europe to set up a national association. They were followed shortly by the UK. The series of national associations culminated in the formation of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) in the 1950s. The idea of international PR in particular was nurtured mainly in Europe as efforts were made to find a common platform for engaging in international understanding and promotion of democracy through PR strategies and practices. It initially had representatives from France, Netherland, Norway, UK, and the USA, with Belgium and Finland joining shortly afterwards. The formation of the IPRA was instrumental in the professionalism of PR. In 1965, the first international code of PR the "Code of Athens", which sought to govern the practice of PR in Europe, was adopted.

The historical growth and development of PR in Europe was further enhanced by the formation of European transnational companies, which resulted in the setting up of corporate communication departments as well as the rise of consumer led PR. Unlike the USA which introduced formal university education in PR in the 1940s, formal education in PR, at least at the university level, did not happen until the 1980s. PR training in Europe was provided mainly by national PR bodies that sprang up in the 1950s and 1960s. During this time, the PR role was mainly filled by journalists, hence the field was mainly focused on media relations. The 1990s saw the formation of a number of international bodies in Europe including the Communication Consultants Association (ICCO) and the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GAPRCM). The IPRA also established the International Quality in Public Relations (IQPR) to promote quality assurance in PR. The same decade saw attempts by scholars to officially document PR in Europe. In 1998, the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EPRERA) began a move to codify the existing body of PR literature of European origin. This became known as the European Public Relations Body of Knowledge project (EBOK). The result of the EBOK project was the publication of the book “*Public Relations and Communication Management in Europe: A Nation by Nation Introduction to Public Relations Theory and Practice*” in 2004 (Van-Ruler & Verčič, 2004: 2).

3.3. MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

The development of the practice of PR is replete with models that seek to show how the profession is and should be practiced. Much of the practice worldwide is premised on American models. This is understandable as American PR practice has dominated the industry for decades. Moss, Verčič and Warnaby (2002: 1) acknowledge this imbalance when they suggest that most PR research work in Europe is largely influenced by models and conceptual frameworks developed by US scholars. They are however quick to point out that cultural and traditional variations between USA and Europe, especially southern and central European countries, means that one cannot easily accept the status quo. The authors therefore note the need to undertake further research to determine the nature and practice of PR in such countries before generalisations can be made regarding the adequacy of American-based models to the practice of PR across Europe. Although efforts to develop a European body of knowledge on the practice of PR and the models that influence such practice has led

to the establishment of what Van Ruler and Verčič call “European models of public relations”, the discussion on the appropriate model to use especially in the era of globalisation continues. The following section will discuss the models of PR practice from the North American (represented by the USA) perspective and then the European perspective.

3.3.1. Models of public relations practice: North American perspectives

Initial attempts to explain the nature and purpose of PR, at least in the USA, led to the publication of the ground-breaking book by James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) titled *Managing Public Relations*. The authors categorised PR practice into four main stages to reflect its past, present and future. Grunig (2001: 107) posits that before the 1970s PR research in the USA hardly attempted to explain the behaviour of PR practitioners but rather looked for ways by which to evaluate activities of PR practitioners. The four models of PR were therefore viewed as not only a way to describe the historical development of PR in the US but also show how modern PR ought to be practiced. Since their publication, the models have been widely used across the world to analyse PR practice. The models have also been critiqued severally as scholars debated the ability of the models to accurately describe PR as practiced globally, especially looking at the differences in culture (Waddington, 2013; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Grunig, 2001; Kim & Hon, 1998). Grunig (1992: 286) nevertheless believes that the models ought to be seen as a set of values and patterns that explain the activities performed by PR practitioners. The four models, the press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical, will be discussed briefly.

The purpose of the *press agency* model is to generate favourable publicity for an individual or organisation in the media. It is a one-way form of communication where the truth is not an essential element. Grunig and Hunt (1984: 21) describe it as the spread of information that is mostly incomplete or distorted. The *public information* model disseminates information that is accurate but is also one-way in practice. In the public information model, the practitioners act as journalists in residence who distribute information considered accurate although the information tends to favour the organisation more than the publics. Both the press agency and public information model are considered as one-way communication models that are meant to change the behaviour of the publics rather than the organisation. The two models do not use

any form of research nor do they follow any strategic thinking process. Practitioners of the two models attempt to engender positive behaviour either through propaganda (press agency) or disseminating generally favourable information (public information). The two-way asymmetric model is premised on persuasive communication but also relies on feedback from its publics. The concept of symmetry implies a move towards mutuality between an organisation and its publics. The two-way asymmetric model therefore suggests activities that generate consensus between the organisation and publics. Feedback is generated through research and is used to formulate communication strategies that will enhance persuasion but not necessarily to change the position of the organisation (Edwards, 2009: 150). The model is considered as being scientific in nature as it uses research to develop persuasive messages. Grunig (2001: 17) however calls it a 'selfish' model due to its manipulative nature. Communication effect is actually one-way, that is, geared towards persuading the publics as the organisation believes that any change must come from the publics rather than the organisation. The two-way symmetrical model which Grunig (2001: 17) describes as the most effective model, relies on using research to determine the behaviour of publics and is dialogical in nature. The two-way symmetrical model is viewed as both ethical and strategic because it uses communication to manage conflict as well as enhance understanding through negotiation and compromise (Grunig, 2001: 17). Grunig (2001: 12) sums it up with the following statement: "with the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners use research and dialogue to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviours of both their organisation and publics." The dialogical nature of the two-way symmetry leads to the building, strengthening, and maintenance of long-term relationship between the organisation and publics. Collaborative efforts on the part of the organisation and publics build mutual understanding and trust.

Both the asymmetric and symmetric models are based on social science research that gauges public knowledge, understanding, and attitude towards an issue. However, whereas the two-way symmetry uses research to understand public opinion and develops strategies that take into account public concerns, the two-way asymmetry uses research to develop strategies that alter opinion in favour of the organisation. The aim of the asymmetrical model is to persuade publics to change their beliefs because the organisation believes the public is wrong. Equilibrium is

maintained in the symmetrical model through a dialogical process with each party willing to adapt and compromise although this does not mean the organisation accepts everything the publics say and vice versa. The point of a symmetrical model is that each attempt to understand the other's worldview and tries to fit in (Bowen, 2013: 903). This is explained by Grunig (2001: 15): "The concept of symmetry directly implies a balance of the organization's and public's interests. Total accommodation of the public's interests would be as asymmetrical as unbridled advocacy of the organization's interests." Grunig, essentially sees the two-way symmetrical model as the standard for excellent PR. It is a model where each party alters their behaviour to accommodate each other. The two-way symmetric communication is a dialogue-based model unlike the other three, which are based on monologue-type communication (Fawkes, 2012: 36).

Table 3.2. Characteristics of the four models of public relations

Characteristics	Model			
	Press agency/ publicity	Public information	Two-way asymmetric	Two-way symmetric
Purpose	Propaganda	Dissemination of information	Scientific persuasion	Mutual understanding
Nature of communication	One-way: complete truth not essential	One-way: truth important	Two-way: imbalanced effects	Two-way: balanced effects
Communication model	Source → Rec.	Source → Rec.	Source → Rec. ← Feedback	Group → Group ←
Nature of research	Little; counting house	Little; readability, readership	Formative; evaluative of attitudes	Formative; evaluative of understanding
Leading historical figures	P.T. Barnum	Ivy Lee	Edward L. Bernays	Bernays, educators, professional leaders
Where practised today	Sports, theatre, product promotion	Government, non-profit associations, business	Competitive business; agencies	Regulated business; agencies
Estimated percentage of organisations practising today	15	50	20	15

Source: Theaker, A. (2012: 35)

The models, especially the two-way symmetric model, have been applied to PR research in both developed and developing countries with results generally showing that PR practice in these countries, regardless of cultural difference, reflect the models. The models have also been used as teaching tools to distinguish between typical PR practice and more advanced practices (Grunig, 2001: 12).

Since their inception, the four models have dominated academic discussion with different conclusions. Larskin (2009: 37) describes them as the most dominant theories discussed in the field of PR. An assessment of studies conducted show that generally, the models are practiced in nearly every jurisdiction (Kiambi, 2012; Larskin, 2009; Pētersone, 2004; Sriramesh, 2000; Kim & Hon, 1998; Grunig et al 1995). However, these reports also showed that the models cannot work in all jurisdictions and that there are factors that influence the practice of PR. Grunig et al (1995), for instance, found that the conditions that allow PR to thrive in western countries may not exist in organisations in other cultures. Their research produced two additional models that influence PR practice in Asia: the personal influence and cultural interpreter (Grunig et al 1995: 164). Kiambi (2012) also found that the personal influence model is the most used by Kenyan PR practitioners, followed by the cultural interpreter. The result corroborated the work of Ming-Yi and Baah-Boakye (2012) who identified these same models to be the most practiced in Ghana, although the four models were also practiced.

Numerous studies (as demonstrated earlier) have reached varied conclusions about the viability of the models in organisations. Much of the discussions relate to the purported overly simplistic nature of the theories to describe complex organisations. The practicality of the two-way symmetrical model in particular has been questioned with some calling it utopian, idealistic, and fanciful (For review of the criticism of the models, especially the two-way symmetrical model, see Chapter 2: 2.2.2.3). Based on these criticisms, Dozier, Grunig and Grunig (1995, 2001) reformulated the model into what they called the 'mixed motive' symmetrical communication. Mixed motive communication is based on the *gaming theory* of Murphy (1991) which sees social relationship between an organisation and its public as a game based on strategies from both sides. Mixed motive communication therefore argues that practitioners are motivated by their loyalty to their organisation as well as the publics that are affected by the behaviours of the organisations. PR practitioners develop strategies designed

to reach a compromise with publics. Opportunities exist for each party to gain in a win-win situation. Although the concept of symmetry was maintained, a new perspective in the form of a 'continuum' was introduced. Within this continuum, asymmetric communication is practiced in the interest of either the public or the organisation. Mixed motive communication is where communication is used as a dialogue mode to reach a mutual understanding. The win-win situation is characterised by persuasion, negotiation, and compromise. Grunig (2001: 25) argues that the mixed motive symmetry resolves the differences between the asymmetrical and symmetrical models.

Despite these arguments by Grunig, what is of interest is that the revised models still failed to take into account the complex circumstances within different environments that affect PR practice. It appears the model was fashioned from a western perspective without considering the complexities of how the business environment works in developing countries like Africa and how these environments shape the practice of PR. Evidence shows (as enumerated earlier) that factors such as political, economic, social, and especially culture are instrumental in the shaping of PR practice in different countries. For the model to be totally accepted it must take cognisance of these critical factors. The findings from this research will throw more light on the applicability of the model in different situations.

3.3.2. Models of public relations practice: European perspectives

In the USA, PR focus on relationship building is based on a symmetrical viewpoint. Practitioners believe in the practice of symmetrical PR to build trust, reduce conflict, and build community. European practitioners on the other hand believe that PR is more than relationship building due mainly to the diversity of the profession's service to both organisations and society as a whole. In view of these differences, Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 240) proposed four models of communication management premised on what they called a 'two-by-two dimensional definition of organisation and communication'. The four models are not seen as exclusive but complementary, hence the need for organisations to use them at the same time. The models are regarded as strategic approaches to daily communication practices. The models are the information model, persuasion model, relationship model, and dialogue model.

The *Information model*: The purpose of the information model is to disseminate information about the organisation with a view to enlightening publics about decisions and plans of the organisation and reduce uncertainty. The model focuses on content and channels of communication and is focused on Harold Lasswell's communication formula of "who says what to whom with what effect," while Smith (2017: 198) also adds "how and why" to the concept. The model is based on early theories of mass media work on which communication science is based. Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 248) describe this kind of model as a "naïve concept of communication management" and not adequate in the practice of communication management. Creation of meaning in the information model is therefore restricted to the denotative meaning of the organisation to target groups.

The *persuasion model* makes a deliberate attempt to influence publics through ethical processes. This is done by attempting to promote the plans and decisions of the organisation to key stakeholders. Persuasion uses the asymmetric approach to present an organisation's side of issues as an attempt to influence key parties to agree with the organisation (Smith, 2017: 198). It is based on theories of rhetoric promoted mainly by Greek philosophers. Latimore et al (2004: 26), for instance, notes that rhetoric was a unique discipline in Greece and that Greek philosophers used persuasive skills to determine the truth or otherwise of arguments and to influence public opinion. Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 249) describe it as "impression management" where the creation of meaning is restricted to luring the connotative meaning of certain target groups into the meaning of the organisation.

The *relationship model* seeks to establish and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and its publics. It seeks to achieve consensus on relevant issues and avoid conflict while promoting cooperation. The focus of communication between both parties is to achieve equilibrium. It is premised on the 'balance theories of communication' hence each party resists the attempt to alter the situation. Attempts are made to restore balance when imbalance is seen to have occurred (Van Heerden, 2004: 63). In the relationship model, the organisation and publics are both active participants in the negotiation process with each seeking acceptable meaning of issues.

The final model, which is the *Dialogue model*, sees PR as a crucial element in the facilitation of interaction between an organisation and its publics. Smith (2017: 199) put it this way: “it involves a sincere and competent attempt at mutual understanding, paralleling the symmetrical model of public relations,” a process Sieberg (in Smith, 2017) calls “confirming communication” because its purpose is to heal and strengthen relationships. Smith (2017: 199) further identifies four (4) goals of the dialogue model: (1) to provide for an information exchange between individuals or groups, (2) to help communication partners make responsible and personally acceptable decisions, (3) to help revive the original vitality of a relationship, and (4) to foster a deep relationship that continues to unite communication partners ever more closely. Essentially, organisations and their publics do not exist just to see to their own needs but show genuine concern about each other. The core of the model is based on new meanings which are continuously generated through facilitation interactions. This is known as ‘dialogue management’ and creation of meaning is limited to the co-creation of continuous learning processes of those related organisationally to the co-creation of new connotative meanings.

Table 3.3. The four models of European public relations

Model variables	Information	Persuasion	Relationship	Dialogue
Organisation and management	Classical	Human relations	Contingency	Learning
Managerial intervention	Directive	Directive	Interactive	Interactive
Organisational communication	Mechanical	Psychological	System - interaction	Interpretive
CM problem	Knowledge	Influence	Trust	Meanings
CM indicator	Readability	Image/reputation	Relationship	Understanding of meanings
CM focus	Dissemination of information	Promotion of plans/ decisions	Accuracy of relationships	Co-creation of new meanings
CM intervention	Informational	Persuasive	Negotiation	Discursive.

Source: Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 252)

With the exception of the press agency model, the American and European models share some similarities. Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 251) are of the view that it is possible to incorporate all major communication management theories within the four models. But, unlike the four models of Grunig and Hunt which suggested the symmetrical model as the best method, Van Ruler and Verčič believe it will be difficult to categorise any of the models of communication management as the ideal or best one. They were therefore sceptical about the result of any research that will indicate one model as being better than the other. Commenting on this, Weick (in Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005: 251) remarks: “the question is not: Is the model true? All models are true in themselves. The question is: When and where is the model true?” Each model is therefore used based on its relevance to the situation hence one cannot be said to be better than the other. This is different from the symmetrical model which is seen as the best of the four models of PR due to its ethical nature and the fact that its emphasis is on a mutual understanding between organisations and stakeholders. The authors pointed out the need for the four models to be regarded as strategies that can be used to solve specific problems as a means of ensuring long-term societal survival.

Van Ruler and Verčič (in Van Heerden, 2004: 64) acknowledged that the models indicated how organisations and publics behaved or should behave, thus neglecting the legitimacy problem of organisations at the societal level. Public legitimacy is very essential for business survival in Europe and the nature of the models is such that it does not allow for public legitimacy. In Europe, societal legitimacy and legitimisation are considered crucial elements for the success of any business. This is not about businesses being morally upright or ethical but undertaking activities that are considered acceptable from the perspectives of society (Steyn & Butschi, 2003: 13-14). Kuckelhaus (in Van Ruler & Verčič, 2003: 14), in advancing the argument for legitimisation, categorised approaches to PR (communication management as it is referred to in Europe): product oriented, marketing oriented, and societally oriented. Societal orientation here describes the place of the organisation in society, not the organisation itself, as the only possible approach to theory building in the 21st century. In developing communication strategies, PR uses a unique way of thinking as articulated by Verčič et al (2001: 373): “a special concern for broader societal issues and approaches to any problem with a concern for implications of organisational

behaviour towards and in the public sphere.” PR is therefore viewed as “in public, with the public and for the public” (Nessman, in Moss, Verčič & Warnaby, 2000: 212-225). This essentially means PR deals with the public sphere. PR in Europe is therefore concerned with activities and values of public relevance and not just relationships. From this perspective, PR is viewed as serving a democratic process by contributing to the free flow of information and its meaning and also developing the public sphere much like journalism (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005: 257). Having these concerns in mind, Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 252-253) identified a fifth model of PR which they called the reflective PR (communication management).

Reflective PR is seen as a bigger model within which all models of PR are subsumed. Reflective PR views humans as reflective beings constantly engaged in the process of societal construction, and organisations as institutions that construct social legitimacy through a continuous reflective communication process. Within the reflective perspective, PR understood to be a strategic process of looking at an organisation from the “outside” or “public” view and not just a phenomenon to be described or defined, nor as a means of viewing relationships between two parties. Reflective PR, in effect, looks at an organisation from the perspectives of the society or public. The reflective approach is principally premised on a combination of the societal approach to PR, the constructivist approach to communication and organisation, the institutional approach to organisation, and a reflection-in-action approach to management (Van Ruler, in Steyn & Butschi, 2003: 14).

Organisations need a license to operate to be able to gain legitimisation. PR as a management function can therefore be perceived as “.....maximizing, optimizing, or satisfying the process of meaning creation, using informational, persuasive, relational, and discursive interventions to solve managerial problems by co-producing societal (public) legitimation” (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005: 263). Holmstrom (in de Beer, Steyn & Rensburg, 2013: 311) conceptualises reflective PR into two tasks, namely reflective and expressive tasks. She refers to the reflective role or task as inward PR where information is selected based on socially responsible behaviour. Organisations then shape their actions in accordance with societal expectations. Expressive task on the other hand is regarded as outward PR, the purpose of which is to regularly disseminate information about the organisation in order to gain and strengthen public trust. The organisation turns to mass media in the dissemination of

the information. The European models accordingly put emphasis on gaining public acceptance and public trust for an organisation to be successful. In describing the reflective model, Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 265) developed a set of parameters which states:

Communication management as a specialty helps organizations by counseling the deliberations on legitimacy, by coaching its members in the development of their communicative competencies, by conceptualizing communication plans, and by executing communication means, using informational, persuasive, relational, and discursive interventions.

This definition sums up four key roles PR practitioners are supposed to play in Europe as managers by counselling or advising the organisation on changes to the environment. The organisation is then able to align its mission/vision, policies, guidelines, and strategies to meet the societal standards and gain social legitimacy; educating the members of the organisation on improving their communicative behaviour so as to respond effectively to the demands of society. Here the internal publics are the target group as they are coached on how to communicate competently to gain acceptance; developing communication strategies that will help the organisation not only to gain trust but also maintain the relationship it has with its publics, and finally by implementing communication plans using a number of strategies.

The models of PR, particularly the two-way symmetrical model, have been used in several research studies, theses, and dissertations worldwide with varied results. Many of these studies have generally acknowledged the use of the models in different cultures but also suggested some variations in the models (Grunig, 2001: 12). Such variations can be found in the *personal influence* and *cultural interpreter* models in part of Asia (Grunig, Grunig, Huang & Lyra, 1995). Whereas many scholars have accepted these models, a number of them have also questioned the validity of the models, which are mainly based on American practice, across cultures with some claiming that the attempts to establish a normative theory of PR that can be supposedly used in every jurisdiction renders cultural, regional, and other differences in PR practice invisible (Holthausen, Petersen & Tindall, 2003: 309). Holthausen,

Petersen and Tindall (2003: 305) found that PR in South Africa was practiced based on culture specific models influenced by the economic, social, and political realities of the country. These models included the *Western Dialogic* model, mainly rooted in dissensus, the *Activist* model, which promotes change in organisations, the *Ubuntu* system, which favours communality rather than individuality, and the *Oral Communication* model, which focuses on oral media in the communication process. Other studies have shown a mixture of the four models and local practices based on cultural, economic, and political factors (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999; Pratt & Ugboajah, 1985; Chen & Culbertson, 1992; Kim & Hon, 1998).

Grunig (2003: 29) suggested the need to move beyond the models and develop theories consisting of continuous, rather than discrete variables as a way of ensuring the progress of science and academic scholarship. In view of this, a new two-way model of PR was developed consisting of four underlying variables described as 'maintenance variables'. These variables are firstly *symmetry* and *asymmetry* or the extent to which collaboration and advocacy describe PR strategy or behaviour. The second set of variables consists of the direction of communication flow, that is, whether PR practice is one-way or two-way. The set of variables shows how *mediated* and *interpersonal forms of communication* were used with the final variable being the extent to which PR practice was considered *ethical* (Grunig, 2003: 29-30).

3.3.3. Models of public relations practice: Non-western perspectives

The North American and European perspectives are not the only models known to influence PR practice, although they may be the most popular. Due to the controversy that arose especially with the introduction of the excellence/two-way symmetrical model, several scholars from other jurisdictions tested these theories in different environments. In Asia and to some extent Africa in particular, two main models have been realised as influencing PR practice. These are the personal influence model and the cultural interpreter model. These will be discussed briefly.

3.3.3.1. The personal influence model

Literature on personal influence is characterised by three schools of thought: firstly, personal influence is based on the personal attributes and characteristics of

individuals, secondly, it is a dimension of relationship management and based on relational activities, and thirdly, it is a model of PR that is based on cultural values, especially in Asia (Falconi, 2011). The focus of this section will be on the third school of thought. The personal influence model is premised on developing personal relationships with key individuals who act as contacts, especially in times when the organisation needs favours. The model itself depicts how a PR practitioner builds relationships, not as a representative of the organisation but as an individual (Gupta et al 2007: 5). The model was first proposed by Sriramesh in 1992 (Sriramesh, 1999: 232) and later by Grunig et al (1995) to depict the importance of interpersonal or face-to-face communication in the PR process. The model posits that cultivating interpersonal relationships leads to long-term impacts in the relationship between organisations and publics.

The personal influence model therefore looks at the 'how' of the relationship building process by ensuring that the relationship is built on emotions, personal identities, behaviours, attitudes, and individual characters (Somjai, 2009: 8). The personal influence model is regarded as the fifth dimension of the four models of PR and refers to the relationship that exists between PR practitioners and governments, media, politics or activist groups (Grunig et al 1995: 181). However, its effectiveness is dependent on the individual practitioner's position and power in a social network (Sriramesh, Grunig & Dozier, 1996: 285). Although the intent of the establishment of these individual relationships is asymmetrical as practitioners take advantage of such relationships to "get journalists to write stories about the organisation represented by a public relations practitioner" (Grunig et al 1995: 180), Grunig et al (1995) still conclude that the model can also be seen in symmetrical terms, that is, a personal relationship that benefits both the organisation and its publics, such as "trusting relationships with reporters or leaders of activists groups such as environmental or consumer organisations" (1995: 184). Toth (2000: 207) postulates that the personal influence model is essential in its contribution to the practice of PR in three ways: first, it allows scholars to apply another worldview to the study of PR at the individual level, second, it proposes an outcome separate from asymmetric and symmetric communication, and third, it suggests an extension from personal influence to interpersonal influence. Toth (2000: 214-215) therefore suggested that the word 'personal' be replaced with 'individual' - to read "individual influence model".

3.3.3.2 The cultural interpreter model

The cultural interpreter model depicts how PR is practiced by organisations operating in other countries “where it needs someone who understands the language, culture, customs, and political system of the host country” (Grunig et al 1995: 182). Basically, multinational organisations hire the services of a local practitioner to explain cultural norms and values to the foreign organisations. The model was first identified by Lyra (1991) when studying PR practice in Greece. This model in particular is key to effective PR in multi-national organisations with foreign chief executives.

Several studies have found a domination of the two models in PR practice. For instance, Sriramesh, Kim and Takasaki (1999: 285) found that PR practice in Asia is based on press agency and publicity models as well as the personal influence and cultural interpreter models. Further evidence from the research suggested personal influence was used as a *quid pro quo* to grant favour to important individuals including governments, media, regulators, and so on, and in return solicit favours in times of organisational need. This usually occurs in the form of easy placement of stories in the media and sometimes killing of stories that might be detrimental to the organisation, provision of entertainment including food, drinks and gifts, mainly based on informal relationships (Sriramesh et al 1999; Shin & Cameron, 2003). Personal influence was also seen to strongly influence relationship management within the Indonesian mining industry (Yudarwati, 2008). Kiambi and Nadler (2012: 506) also noted that the two models dominate PR practice in Kenya while Ming-Yi and Baah-Boakye (2009: 15) identified the cultural interpreter as the most dominant model of PR in Ghana, followed by the personal influence model. Other studies (Huang, 2000; Sriramesh, Grunig & Dozier, 2009; Chmielecki, 2012; Gupta & Bartlett, 2007; Sriramesh, 2009) have acknowledged the influence of individual relationships at the interpersonal level to influence the practice of PR.

What is significant is that most of these studies have been done in Asia with very little coming from other environments. This in itself can be a criticism of the models. Even though Grunig et al (1995) sought to link the personal influence model to the symmetrical model, a closer look at the models shows they are open to unethical practices by practitioners, a situation that flies in the face of symmetrical communication which is based on strong ethics. Practitioners can use this form of

relationship to lobby for issues of public interest to be held back such as convincing reporters to 'destroy' a potentially harmful story or get regulators to bend the rules in their favour. Despite these concerns the little evidence available suggests that the two models are practiced in the USA and other non-Asian countries (Tindall & Holtzhausen, 2012; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009; Molleda & Moreno, 2008). A review of literature shows that research on the two models in Africa is very limited. The only known research in Africa is that of Kiambi and Nadler (2012), Ming-Yi and Baah-Boaky (2009) and Holtzhausen, Petersen and Tindall (2003). Holtzhausen et al (2003) discovered that South African practitioners developed their own models depending on the social, economic, and political realities they find themselves in and do not necessarily follow the symmetric and asymmetric models.

There is the need to conduct extensive research on these models from an African perspective to determine their validity to the African situation. However, that is not the focus of the current study. The current study will be based on previous models discussed. It is believed that the result of the research will nevertheless shed some light on the personal influence and the cultural interpreter models, especially the personal influence model.

To be able to develop the appropriate framework that will guide the practice of PR, it is essential to determine how PR in Ghana is practiced and on which model it is premised on. The study will determine if PR as it is practiced currently is based on the four models or, as other scholars have found in other cultures, there are other factors such as culture, political, and socio-economic factors that influence the practice, for which reason a new framework should be developed to guide such practice.

The next section will review development of PR from the African perspective. The discussion will be based on two key areas: the antecedent of African PR and the development of modern PR in Africa.

3.4. PUBLIC RELATIONS IN AFRICA

This section discusses the historical development of PR from the African perspective. It explores the early origin of PR within the African context as well as its modern development and practice. This section discusses some of the factors, especially culture, that influence the practice of the profession in Africa.

3.4.1. Early beginnings

The practice of PR on the African continent, though not well documented (Skinner & Mersham, 2009: 284), is understood to have its roots in ancient civilisation. The application of certain PR techniques originated at the dawn of African civilisation. The pharaohs of ancient Egypt, for example, used word-pictures on remarkable monuments to announce their achievements (Rensburg, 2009: 358). Academicians such as Rensburg (2009: 358) and Tench, D'Artrey and Fawkes (2009: 40) suggest that long before Africa was colonised, activities relating to PR were already being practiced on the continent. Nartey, for instance, drew similarities between the roles of a PR practitioner and that of the chief linguist, who spoke on behalf of chiefs in traditional African villages. In the traditional African rule, no chief or elder statesmen spoke directly to their visitors. The chief spokesman, also known as the linguist, became the channel of communication and interactions. These linguists were very eloquent and knowledgeable in the norms and practices of the village. This practice is still prevalent in most African countries, including Ghana, where the chieftaincy system is still prevalent. The linguists were a group of people who had authority and were greatly feared and respected.

The town crier is another person who plays the role of PR in communities. He stands in the village square and beats his instrument (usually a gong) to gather the community members. He then delivers his message, usually from the chief's palace to the people. Traditional means of communication such as the talking drums and wooden drums were used as a form of mass communication due to their ability to reach large numbers of people (Akpabio, 2009: 352; Wilson, 2008). Traditional African marriages are also based on some form of negotiation or PR. The family of the man goes along with a 'linguist', who is mostly a woman, and negotiates for the hand of the bride to be. Presents are given by the groom's family with the linguist playing a key role in the acceptance of the presents by the bride's family. The concept of PR is also found in African traditional music, dancing, and beating of drums. These are used as channels of communication to send messages to communities. PR, albeit practiced in a different form, is therefore not a new thing on the African continent (Rensburg, 2009: 258).

3.4.2. Development of public relations practice in Africa

The development of contemporary PR in Africa has been attributed in a large part to three key factors:

- The era of colonisation - during which time the need for information dissemination was identified,
- the fight for independence - which resulted in the growth of nationalism and the emergence of pressure groups and political parties, and
- the move towards democracy (Tench, D'Artrey & Fawkes, 2009: 40; Akpabio, 2009: 352; Okereke, 2002: 2-3).

The period between 1940 and 1970 witnessed the setting up of PR departments to address issues faced by commercial organisations. It was also a period that saw the fight for and attainment of independence by many African countries with the practice being more focused on targeted publics, programmes, and budgets (Okereke, 2002: 4-5). Akpabio (2009: 352) likened the African fight for independence to the American revolutionary war, and the activities of political groups and individuals to that of Samuel Adams, one of the leading American revolutionaries who was instrumental in using PR activities in the fight for American independence from British rule. The fight for self-rule in Africa used tactics such as peasant revolts, worker strikes, protests and mass agitations, mostly organised by political activists or pressure groups.

PR practice during the 1980s had no focus or value in organisations. Practitioners were mainly personal assistants to the chief executives or press/information officers. PR practice was mainly based on the press agency model as many organisations relied more on media relations skills to enhance their reputation. Blankson (2009: 183) is of the view that PR practice prior to the mid-1990s political and economic reforms had a number of similarities:

- It is a European import that has been adapted to African societies and structures. Even so, there are marked differences between PR in Africa and in Europe or the USA.
- It is synonymous with national public communication campaigns or nation-building programmes. This is because development and nation-building goals continue to occupy government, organisational and individual attention owing to the region's endemic poverty, civil unrest, economic decadence, and ethnic diversity.

Governments usually assume responsibility for national development plans and expect loyalty and compliance from communication practitioners. Organisations have to develop programmes to demonstrate their unwavering support of the government.

- African practitioners play a socially responsible role when they contribute directly to national development.
- African practitioners play largely a communication and information-generating function. They follow what Grunig and Hunt (1984) refer to as press agency, publicity, and public information models. Most act as the information officers in ministries or other government agencies and play a largely functional role - informing and persuading people. This focus makes communication more of a conduit for communicating “programmed” development news than for nurturing development-oriented norms among the public.
- PR campaigns in Africa generally involve one-way, persuasive messages from the government to the people, using whatever media is available, but mostly a large network of field staff including agricultural extension agents, public health workers, community development specialists, and PR officers. Traditional communication techniques such as radio broadcasting, storytelling, drama, and mounting loudspeakers on cars or vans, are still common and effective for communicating campaign objectives.

Interestingly, Kiambi (2014:70) found evidence to show that PR practice in colonial Africa had similarities with the two-way symmetrical communication. The British colonial administration used PR, not only to disseminate public information, but also to build mutual understanding between the colonial government and the communities in order to facilitate dialogue and engender a greater understanding of government policies (Watson, 2014:3). Kiambi (2014:70) quotes the Chief Secretary to the colonial government who described PR as “the art of establishing and maintaining within a community a spirit of fellowship and co-operation based on mutual understanding and trust.” Based on this definition, Kiambi concludes that the British public servant clearly knew the relevance of PR in helping establish relationships with local communities.

The emergence of democratisation processes in Africa in the 1990s is regarded as the greatest influence on the development of PR. The period ushered in political pluralism

and neo-liberal policies. African countries were required by the World Bank and foreign donors to undertake democratic and economic reforms as a prerequisite for continued loans. The period also saw trade unions, students, business and academic communities putting pressure on their governments to implement democratic reforms and media pluralism and freedom of speech. The pressures from within and outside of these countries eventually forced governments, most of whom were military dictators, to introduce democratic elections, engage the public in civic discussions, open the media landscape to allow for ownership of private media, and finally open up the national economy to other markets (Blankson, 2009: 184-185). Former US trade representative Charlene Barshefsky captured this new democratic and economic reform in the following statement:

In many African nations, governments have adopted economic reforms, from liberalizing exchange rates, to privatizing state enterprises, reducing subsidies and cutting barriers to trade and investment. These have been joined by free elections in many countries, and our own exports to Africa are up by nearly 50 per cent, African exports to the US have risen as well. (Pratt & Okigbo, 2004: 283)

The reforms led to the establishment of multiparty democracy, relatively stable political systems, and moderate economic growth in a number of African countries, including Ghana. The reforms also transformed the media landscape with a number of independent and private media being established, hence breaking the monopoly of the state owned media. More than a hundred private radio stations were established in many African countries between 1990 and 2006. This new phenomenon allowed citizens to participate in civic discourse while businesses found different means to engage their customers. The rapid growth of democracy and its attendants rubbed off powerfully on PR practice. The growth of the media landscape, for instance, opened up new opportunities for practitioners to carry out messages to their publics using several avenues.

The advance of technology, the internet and globalisation have further developed the practice on the continent as practitioners now have access to other sources of information. There has been an endless stream of multinational corporations in Africa

due to globalisation and the advancement of ICT. Countries with relatively stable political environments and, who are experiencing economic growth, are benefiting from the presence of investors from other countries. This has created new opportunities for the growth of PR in African countries (Blankson, 2009: 186). Sriramesh and Verčič (2007: 356) acknowledge that despite Africa lagging behind in the development of PR, evidence available suggests the profession is increasing in stature. This agrees with the view of Skinner (2013: 15-16) who emphasised the steady progress that leading African nations are making in the field of PR and strategic communication even if that progress is slow. Skinner suggests that regardless of the disparities on the African continent, there is a light at the end of the tunnel for PR leadership in Africa since practitioners are innovative and have the ability to draw on global influence.

Opukah (in Van Heerden, 2004:112) identified some global issues that impact on the practice of PR on the African continent. These are:

- Increased emphasis on public power, democratisation and freedom,
- Unsustainable population growth in poor countries,
- The major consumer and voting block is the power of the youth,
- A trend to multiparty of nations to US unipolarity,
- Increasing global brands growth and power,
- The increase in the power and influence of donors,
- Increasing poverty,
- Increasing literacy and multilingualism,
- Increased urbanisation characterised by urban poverty and crime,
- Rapid growth of technology - a world in which we now have virtual teams and real-time communication,
- Ongoing major wars and live media coverage,
- The increase of mass killers such as the spread of AIDS despite sophisticated scientific advancement, and
- The increasing depletion of resources.

Skinner (2013: 16, 17) also identified some issues affecting the development of the practice on the continent. Some of these challenges included the scarcity of

information and technology infrastructure, the high cost of international bandwidth, the dearth of local content as well as the lack of cooperation among development partners, and political instability in many parts of Africa. On the media front, Africa's media landscape has expanded over the years with private stations, including international stations such as the BBC, VOA and Canal France, Channel Africa satellite television, and Multi Choice Africa. However, these foreign media have limited value as they are unable to make impact as they attempt to be more "African" and therefore lose the localism and relevance on which editorial communications depend. They are also limited in terms of their targeted publics who are English-speaking, relatively literate and affluent (Mersham & Skinner, 2009: 294). The discussion above gives an indication that development of PR in Africa has been influenced by a number of factors. Despite the disparities in the development, especially when compared to that of Europe, USA, and Asia, Skinner (2013: 17) is of the view that PR in Africa has operated successfully for over 50 years with more than 12,000 members in the various professional bodies around the continent. These national PR associations are overseen by the African Public Relations Association (APRA), which is the successor to the Federation of African Public Relations Associations (FAPRA), established in 1975.

Africa is gradually becoming influential in the contribution to the body of knowledge on the profession with South Africa leading the way. South Africa has a relatively mature industry followed by Nigeria and other countries such as Ghana and Kenya. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of information on contribution of African practitioners to the global discussion on PR development. South Africa has done extensive work in this area in an attempt to address this shortfall. As democratic processes expand, it is expected that opportunities will open for the practice, especially in the private sector, to further develop. Indeed, Skinner (2013: 18) comments on this when he notes the continuous growth of political democratic institutions as well as the adoption of mixed and market economies across the continent and how these have combined to reshape the attitude of governments and the public and private sector towards PR activities. Some public and private sector businesses continue to realise the importance of PR in spreading their message across a terrain occupied by a multiplicity of media. Skinner and Mersham (2009: 308) strongly believe the development of PR in Africa will continue and eventually influence the growth of social and economic development

on the continent. PR in Africa is growing steadily as organisations are becoming increasingly aware of and appreciate PR as key to their success. Nigeria and Kenya currently have a relatively strong PR environment while Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania are also experiencing steady growth in the industry. Practitioners have been called upon to “intensify training, change orientation, update knowledge of current issues, engage in peer review mechanisms, self-criticisms, and assess their contributions to Afro optimism” and to “provide better advice to African leaders and organisations to enhance good governance and communication” (FAPRA, 2006).

3.4.3. Public relations and the African worldview

To understand the practice of PR in Africa, it is essential to place it within the context of how African societies operate and how African communities relate to each other. This is mostly referred to as the African worldview. Africans generally see themselves as social beings and thus work with a collective consciousness. This is reflected in their general behaviour. Africans are generally sensitive to each other’s needs and see themselves as a collective group. This affects the way businesses on the continent operate. The study will now discuss briefly the African worldview and how it affects the business environment.

The concept of African worldview is not new as it has been applied to the way Africans relate to each other and how such relations affect the business environment (Tilson, 2014; Van Heerden, 2004: 121). Van Heerden points out that one can only understand the nature of the African business environment by first understanding African worldview and cultural foundations. Africans generally see themselves as social beings and this consciousness greatly influences the way they behave, how they express themselves, and how they engage in spiritual self-fulfilment. There is a strong interconnectedness and brotherliness as opposed to individualism. This is even more profound especially as the continent is steeped in poverty and being one another’s keeper is the only means by which survival is ensured (Van Heerden, 2004: 121). Mersham and Skinner (2009: 309) describe the African worldview as one of the most powerful influences/concepts that shapes the way Africans behave. The worldview is based on the concept of collectivism and recognition of the value of all individuals. This act of collectivism is framed in the African philosophy of ‘*Ubuntuism*’, which means “I am because of others.....stressing interconnections and collectively”

(Worthington, 2011: 611). Ubuntu is a value-based traditional philosophy premised on African humanism that runs deeply throughout African thought and action (de Beer & Mersham, 2004: 338) and emphasises on communalism rather than individualism (White, 2009: 220). The concept of ubuntu is a cultural philosophy inherent among the Bantu people of Africa (Natifu & Zikusooka, 2014: 224) and has been in existence as a cultural virtue for centuries (Rensburg, 2008: 253). Fourie (2008: 63) opines that different African cultures and African languages interpret the philosophy differently to mean “a person is defined in relation to the community,” “that I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am,” that “it is through others that one attains selfhood,” and that “a person is born for the other.”

Mersham, Skinner and Rensburg (2011: 198) state that when applied to PR, the concept of ubuntu moves beyond the individual and individual rights while emphasis is placed on community and the collective. The African is seen as a participatory being who depends on others for his/her development. There is therefore a high emphasis on negotiation, inclusiveness, transparency, and tolerance. For example, among the Bantu people in Uganda, PR means “*relating well with people*” (Natifu & Zikusooka, 2014: 224). Mersham and Skinner (2009: 309) again note that the African philosophy may explain why PR theorists tend to find African PR intriguing, posing challenges to accepted normative approaches, in the attempt to develop a new and sustainable global model of PR. Therefore, to develop a model that truly reflects the global practice of PR, efforts must be made to understand the context in which PR in Africa is practiced. The implications of the ubuntu philosophy for post-modern thoughts and western view of PR is framed in the words of Christians (2004):

Since the self cannot be conceived without necessarily conceiving of others, Ubuntu adds a universal and compelling voice against the Enlightenment’s atomistic individuals who exist prior to and independently of their social order. In the West, where ‘individualism often translates into an impetuous competitiveness’, the cooperation entailed by ubuntu’s ‘plurality of personalities’ in a ‘multiplicity of relationships’ is an attractive, though overwhelming concept. The modernist concept of individuality now has to move from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence,

from individuality vis-à-vis community to individuality a la community (p. 245).

A study by Angus and Kapanga (2007) on the key drivers of brand growth in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Mozambique, for instance, identified among others, the power of the community, word of mouth, tradition and trust, which are key values that permeate everyday life in ways important to communication management. Currently, there is a deficiency of African literature on PR from the African worldview. This means that African scholars and practitioners are forced to approach and teach PR based on a western framework. In as much as this is not necessarily bad, Van Heerden (2004: 128) points out that it leads to conflict within the individual once they are confronted with African realities. The practice, education and research for PR in Africa can only be effective if there is an African body of knowledge based on African philosophy. Mer sham, Skinner and Rensburg (2011: 201) posit that Africa is capable of providing a unique contribution to the global practice of PR. The authors found significance in the words of Steve Biko, a celebrated South African anti-apartheid activist, for contemporary PR:

Westerners have on many occasions been surprised at the capacity we have for talking to each other - not for the sake of arriving at a particular conclusion, but merely to enjoy the communication for its own sake.

And:

We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationships. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa - giving the world a more human face.

In essence, the sense of belongingness is quite strong on the African continent. Interpersonal relationships are created as the members of the communities see themselves as one. This is reflected in the dialogical nature of African communication. The African treasures human relations above all else as this is what builds their identity and enhances their humanness.

Mersham and Skinner (2009: 310) admit that the field of PR and communication management has some way to go before it can be recognised and given the legitimacy sought for by scholars for decades. Van Heerden (2004: 238) concludes by indicating that the core of social responsibility is summarised in the African worldview and social structures.

In the light of the global expansion of PR, the question one needs to ask is *whether the African worldview has not been influenced in as far as the practice of PR on the continent is concerned?* A review of the various worldviews/paradigms and models shows some similarities between them and the African worldview. The concept of African worldview in a way reflects the relational and symmetrical paradigms of North America and to some extent that which is practiced in Asia (personal influence and cultural interpreter models). The little literature available (Kiambi & Nadler, 2012; Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2009) shows that PR in Africa is based on relationship building and that good interpersonal relationship is regarded as key to OPR. Practitioners play a central role in the OPR as both parties socialise and build good relations (Kiambi & Nadler, 2012: 506). It will be interesting to determine how far the African worldview exists in the practice of PR in Ghana. With the number of multinational organisations growing each day in all sectors, including the financial sector, the question is whether the practice of PR will be based on African influences or whether it will be a mixture of other worldviews as determined by the few research studies on the continent. In this study PR practice will be explored and tested based on its roles (activities) and models (purpose). Results will enable the researcher to develop the appropriate framework that will guide the practice of PR, not only in the organisations studied, but also in Ghana as a whole.

The next section will discuss various roles (activities) that PR practitioners engage in. The discussion once again will look at the American and European perspectives and how these have influenced research worldwide. The discussion will also focus on PR roles (if any) as practiced on the African continent.

3.5. PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLES

One of the most dominant areas of research among scholars is the concept of PR roles. The idea of PR roles has been discussed for decades as scholars seek to establish PR as a professional discipline (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006: 36; Steyn, 2009: 95). The concept is premised on the day-to-day activities of a PR practitioner and how these activities are categorised based on the practitioner's status within the organisation. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2006: 36) define the concept of roles as "abstractions about patterned behaviours of individuals in organisations, a way of classifying the myriad of activities that an individual might perform as a member of an organisation." The concept of roles was initially introduced by Broom and Smith in 1979 to define and understand the various functions of PR practitioners. As stated earlier, roles research has been studied at length by both American and European scholars with some misgivings, especially among the European practitioners. Part of these debates stems from whether PR practices/roles are the same/similar across cultures or generic across countries (Culbertson & Chen, 1996; Verčič, Grunig & Grunig, 1996). To put the discussion into proper perspective, the two worldviews will be looked at. Petersen, Holtzhausen and Tindall (2002: 1) are of the view that examining PR roles in an international setting is essential to understand the practice of PR in a particular environment.

3.5.1. PR roles: North American perspective

Glen Broom, in his seminal works in the 1970s and 1980s (Broom & Smith, 1978, 1979; Broom, 1982), attempted to establish a typology of PR roles that would clearly explain the nature and scope of PR practice within the organisational environment. Broom and Smith conceptualised the PR roles into four categories, the expert prescriber, communication facilitator, problem-solving facilitator, and the communication technician (Dozier 1992: 329).

- The *expert prescriber* is described as the 'informed practitioner', that is, the one with the authority to solve critical PR issues. These are practitioners who are best informed on PR issues and who have the capacity to develop solutions to such issues. Top management assumes a relatively passive involvement and become highly dependent on the practitioner. In working on PR issues, practitioners identify and analyse the issue, develop the programme, and take full responsibility for its implementation (Broom &

Sha, 2012: 33). In this role both the practitioner and management are in a “seductive” state. Management believe that the practitioner is the expert and so can competently handle the issues. They therefore become overly dependent on the practitioner and show little or no commitment to the PR programme. On the other hand, the practitioner is seduced into believing that only he/she can handle such a situation. Practitioners therefore have a sense of gratification as they are viewed as the authority on the issue at hand. Grunig and Hunt (1984: 21) link this role to the two-way asymmetric and publicity/press agentry models of PR practice.

- The *Communication facilitator* plays the role of a go-between or liaison between the organisation and its publics. Practitioners are viewed as sensitive listeners and information brokers who serve as liaisons, interpreters, and mediators. Their role is facilitating two-way communication, removing barriers in relationships, and keeping the channel of communication constantly open. Essentially, practitioners play the boundary-spanning role by linking the organisation and the publics to each other as a means of improving the decision-making process of both organisation and publics (Brooms & Sha, 2012: 33; Dozier, 1992: 330).
- The *problem solving process facilitator* assists management in defining and solving issues in a systematic way. It is a collaborative effort between management and the practitioner, which is in contrast to the expert prescriber. Practitioners are part of the strategic planning team and engage actively with management in identifying and solving communication problems (Broom & Sha, 2012: 33; Dozier, 1992: 330). Grunig and Hunt (1984: 25-26) suggest that the problem solving process facilitator’s role is essential in the practice of two-way symmetrical PR.
- The final role conceptualised by Broom and Smith is the *communication technician role*. Practitioners mainly implement decisions taken by the dominant coalition in the organisation. Practitioners are viewed as “journalists-in-residence” due to their communication skills. They are responsible for writing and editing newsletters, news releases, and feature stories. Practitioners practicing this role are seen as operating the press agentry/publicity and public information models (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 21-22).

Research shows that even though the practitioner plays several roles, in time a dominant role emerges. Broom discovered a direct relationship between the expert prescriber, communication facilitator, and problem solving facilitator roles. The three roles, despite being distinct, tend to be performed interchangeably by the same practitioner and is different from the technician role. Two consistent roles therefore emerged to define the daily activities of practitioners, the manager role and the technician role (Broom & Sha, 2012: 34; Fieseler, Lutz & Meckel, 2015; Tench, D'Artey & Fawkes, 2009: 157; Lattimore et al 2004: 61). The managerial role assists in decision-making processes. Practitioners in this role use research to enact communication policies that ensure successful PR programmes. It is based on strategic thinking and systematic planning together with the dominant coalition. PR practitioners go beyond the communication processes by engaging in activities such as environmental scanning, organisational intelligence, negotiation and coalition building, issues management, programme evaluation, and management counselling (Broom & Sha, 2012: 34). The technician on the other hand carries out what is generally termed as production activities (writing, editing, press releases, website design, feature stories, annual production, distribution) and does not influence policy decision-making. The technician role is typically regarded as the core of PR work - engaging in media relations activities and producing mediated communication. The two roles show a clear distinction in terms of performance and influence. Again the PR manager mostly possesses similar skills as the technician but has research, problem-solving, and strategic thinking abilities in addition, and is also accountable to the dominant coalition (Berger & Reber, 2013: 180).

3.5.2. PR roles: European perspectives

In 1988, PR scholars in Europe started a process aimed at producing an European Public Relations Body of Knowledge (EBOK) which will codify how the profession was practiced in Europe. This was aimed at counteracting the impression created by American scholars that PR is practiced the same way everywhere. Attempts to fully understand and codify the practice of PR in Europe were made. European PR professionals have long suggested differences in the approach to how PR is practiced compared to the USA and therefore saw the need to codify an existing body of PR literature of European origin and identify clear dimensions of the practice (Van Ruler, Verčič, Flodin & Buetschi, 2002: 166-175). To achieve this objective, a Delphi study

was conducted by European PR scholars in different European countries. A Delphi study is a research technique that is used to generate an understanding of a concept or “assessing future, complex, or ambiguous subjects” (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2002: 1). The study attempted to understand the specific nature of European PR as well as content and parameters. The project identified some key dimensions of public relations as practiced in Europe including its definition, key concepts, its essence and contribution, aim and value, parameters, country characteristics, and the name of the discipline (Van Heerden, 2004: 70-71).

Van Ruler et al (2001: 380) identified differences in the European approach to PR in comparison to that of the USA. The most profound difference was the conceptualisation of four dimensions or roles of European PR. These dimensions or roles are discussed below:

- The *managerial role* focuses on the mission and strategy of the organisation and is aimed at commercial or other groups. Strategies are developed to maintain relationship and gain public trust and/or mutual understanding.
- The *operational role* is focused solely on implementation and evaluation of communication action plans formulated on behalf of the organisation by others.
- The *reflective role* focuses on analysing changing standards and values in society. It is premised on organisational values and norms and a way of ensuring a socially responsible behaviour by the organisation and to gain legitimacy.
- The *educational role* is concerned with the communicative behaviours of the internal publics. Its focus is on enabling the organisational members to become communicatively competent to be able to respond to social demand.

The reflective role is considered the most important role among the four roles. The reflective role consists of analysing changing standards, values, and norms in society and providing the necessary information to the dominant coalition. The decision-makers then adjust the standards and values of the organisation through socially responsible behaviour in order to gain legitimacy (De Beer et al 2013: 309).

A comparison of these dimensions to that of the historic roles of PR shows clear similarities. The reflective and managerial roles reflect the manager role while the operational role also reflects the technician role. For the purpose of this study the manager and technician roles are equated to the European roles. However, as Van Heerden (2004: 71-72) points out, there is uncertainty as to the existence of the educator role in Africa, and for that matter this research will not focus on the educator role to determine the roles practiced in Ghana.

3.5.3 PR roles in Africa

Despite the numerous research studies on PR roles by scholars worldwide, Africa appears to have fallen behind in this area as well. Whereas Europe and the USA have some form of PR roles identity, the same cannot be said of Africa in terms of a common body of knowledge on the uniqueness of PR roles as found on the continent. It must be emphasised once again that the few research studies found on the continent have mainly been from South Africa. Available literature suggests that much of the research work has been focused on PR roles using the manager and technician perspectives from the USA. As yet there is no effort to codify PR roles that are unique to the African practitioner, especially when one realises the complex nature of relationships and how they affect the business environment in Africa. South Africa developed a role that is called the strategist role to define the activities of PR practitioners in the country (this will be discussed later in the chapter). Apart from this, the few literature studies available suggest a mixture of the technician, manager, and to some extent, strategist role in the rest of Africa. Nabukeera (2006: 100-101), in comparing the roles practiced in other jurisdictions compared to that of Ugandan practitioners, found that PR practice was based on the strategist, technician and manager roles. The manager role was, however, the dominant one practiced, an indication that PR in Uganda was practiced at the advanced level. The strategist role was found to be at a low level of practice. Van Heerden and Rensburg (2005: 86-87) illustrated in their research that African PR practitioners perform the strategist and technician roles. The authors posit that the roles of practitioners in Africa are intrinsically linked with a concern for gaining social legitimacy, hence efforts are placed into ensuring activities are geared towards a socially responsible behaviour. In short, the practice of PR in Africa is based on societal perspectives. Their research also failed to show a clear difference between the

manager/technician roles, which creates the impression that the manager role as conceptualised in theory does not exist in Africa. Steyn (1999: 40) also conceptualised and empirically verified the strategist role of PR from the perspective of CEOs. Styen concludes that excellent PR can only be practiced when the practitioner plays the role of a PR strategist. This is corroborated in a research by Meintjes (2011: 86) which suggests top management in organisations expects the most senior PR practitioner to play the strategist role by scanning and monitoring the environment, anticipating issues and their consequences on the organisation, and developing the appropriate policies to ensure they live up to societal expectations. A study by Steyn, Green and Grobler (2001) suggests that PR roles as practiced in the public sector differ from those which are performed in the private sector. In their study on strategic management roles as performed by practitioners within government agencies, Steyn, Green and Grobler (2001: 10-11) found the predominant role to be mainly that of the historic technician (specifically as a media relations specialist) as well as general managerial activities such as managing staff, organising budget, representing the department at management meetings etc. Activities not performed included the role of the strategist and developing communication strategies for the department. The lack of a strategic role within the government department may not be surprising as such tends to have defined publics who have no choice but to work with them. Neither do they face competition as the corporate world/private sector does. However, this does not mean they do not need to play the strategist and manager roles as activities under these roles shape reputation. Le Roux (2010: 299) also found that actual roles performed by practitioners were the technician, manager, and strategist roles with the technical role being the most dominant. The technician role was followed by the manager and strategist roles respectively. The research found that although a number of the practitioners had managerial titles, they were actually performing the role of a technician. Most who were strategists also held human resource-related titles. The reality then is that roles are not dependent on titles. Being corporate communication manager does not necessarily mean one performs a managerial function or one has to have a PR title to be performing PR roles. Gqamane (2010: 95) also found that in many organisations where the PR department was independent of another department, PR was not practiced as a management function and did not contribute to decision-making at the top level. Practitioners however participated in decision-making where PR was part of the marketing department. Participation in decision-making was

therefore dependent on the organisational structure. The findings give a clear indication of management's view of the importance of PR and its ability to contribute effectively to organisational effectiveness.

The discussion above shows PR in Africa is a mixture of the three role typology, that is, manager, technician, and strategist. The strategist role in particular has been discussed at length, especially in South Africa where it originates, to differentiate it from the two role typology of managerial and technician. The next section will briefly discuss the strategist role as differentiated from the other roles.

3.5.3.1. The strategist role of South Africa

Before the development of the strategist role, scholars such as Moss, Warnaby and Newman (2001: 301) and Grunig (2001: 6, 8) had already stressed the essence of having a strategic role. The authors underlined the importance of identifying the contribution of PR to strategic decision-making. Grunig, for instance, in commenting on how PR contributes to strategic management concludes that strategic PR is the “single characteristics that most distinguished excellent public relations from less-excellent public relations functions” (2001: 6,8). The strategic role of PR is regarded as essential if organisations are to be excellent and competitive within an ever-changing environment (De Beer, 2001: 2).

In view of this, Steyn (2003: 1) conceptualised and empirically verified the “strategic role” within the South African context. The role was conceptualised based on Van Riel's ‘mirror function’, which describes the role of the practitioner as “monitoring of relevant environmental developments and the anticipation of their consequences for the organisation's communication policy.” Steyn and Butschi (2003: 8) however broadened the mirror function to include:

monitoring of relevant environmental developments and the anticipation of their consequences for the organisation's policies and strategies, especially with regard to relationships with stakeholders and other interest groups in society.

PR must operate at three main levels - the macro level (strategic), meso level (manager), and micro level (technician) if it is to contribute effectively to organisational success (Grunig, 1992: 3). The PR strategist therefore operates at the macro (societal)

level by analysing the environment (scanning the environment). In this way the practitioner is able to assist the organisation shape its policies to be in line with changing environmental trends. The strategist plays the role of a boundary spanner whereby he/she interprets the environment to management and management to the stakeholders (Steyn 2007: 139; Grunig et al 2002: 2; Grunig, 2001: 6, 141; De Beer, 2001: 2; Steyn & Puth, 2000: 17; Moss et al 2000: 301). Scanning the environment allows the practitioner to determine consequences of organisational action or stakeholder behaviour and communicate these back to management. Management then makes a strategic decision that ensures its acceptance among its stakeholders (Le Roux, 2013; 2010: 120). The practitioner at the strategic level serves as a bridge between the organisation and its stakeholders. By playing the boundary spanning role effectively, the practitioner helps the organisation adapt to changes within the environment. This boundary spanning role has two main components: firstly, the practitioner obtains information from the environment and feeds it to the organisation. The views of stakeholders are crucial to maintaining equilibrium and ensuring public trust and social acceptance (Steyn, 2007: 139, 146; Steyn, 2004: 71). The PR practitioner therefore functions as an “early warning system that identifies issues before a crisis erupts.”

Sharpe (2000: 358) is of the view that management sometimes tends to select what it wants to hear and makes decisions that may be wrong. This calls for the strategist to hold “...a degree of detachment from the motives that drive other members of management.” Secondly, the PR strategist interprets the views of the organisation to the publics, which is compared to the window function - “the preparation and execution of a communication policy and strategy, resulting in messages that portray all facets of the organisation in a transparent way” (Steyn & Butschi, 2003: 8). Grunig (in Steyn, 2007: 139)) suggests that interpreting decisions and views of the organisation to the publics is a strategic function and allows the organisation to behave in a socially responsible manner.

The functions of the strategist also consist of building relationship with stakeholders and managing reputation risk as well as development of strategy (Everett, 2006: 101-102; Everett & Steyn, 2006: 25–26; Steyn & Puth, 2000: 17–18). Steyn and Butschi (2003: 20) identified striking similarities between the mirror/strategist role of South Africa and the reflective role as practiced in Europe. Both see PR as:

- operating at the macro or societal level, spanning the boundary between organisation and external environment in a listening capacity (the outside-in approach).
- bringing in information from the external/societal environment that the top management structure in an organisational system should consider.
- pointing out to top management the consequences of the information for the organisation.
- influencing top management to adapt organisational strategies and behaviour according to the social intelligence obtained.
- being involved in issues of organisational trust, legitimation, and reputation.

The outcome of the EBOK suggested that European PR (reflective) is inherently different from that of North America (manager/technician). Steyn (2005: 72) suggests that the most senior PR practitioner in organisations typically plays the strategist role by constantly scanning the environment and anticipating consequences of the organisation's decisions. The strategist role is therefore very similar to the reflective role as identified by the EBOK and conceptualised in theory by Holmstrom. The similarities (as outlined above) were therefore broadened with a reflective dimension. The roles discussed will be adapted for this study as a means of guiding the theoretical and empirical aspects of the study.

3.6. DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN GHANA

This section will review the development and practice of PR in Ghana. The discussion will commence with a brief historical background of Ghana including its geography, economy, political, and cultural characteristics. The discussion will then look at the landscape of PR in Ghana by examining the historical development of PR and then its practice. The discussion will review areas such as professionalism, PR education/training, and contribution to the body of knowledge.

3.6.1. Brief history of Ghana

Ghana, a former British colony, became the first African country in Sub-Saharan Africa to establish self-governments of Africans when it gained independence from Britain in 1957. The independence revolution was led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who became the country's first president. The country is the geographic centre of the world and is surrounded by three Francophone countries, Cote d'Ivoire to the West, Togo to the east and Burkina Faso to the north. The southern border is covered by the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. At the time of independence, Ghana had a strong economy which was based on timber, cocoa (Ghana was the world's leading producer of cocoa) and gold. Compared to other African countries, Ghana's transportation network was excellent and boasted the highest per capita income in Africa. Ghana's current population is estimated to be 27.9 million, made up of 75 ethnic groups with different ethnic languages. Ghana's freedom did not last long as it was plunged into chaos with a series of coups, starting with the overthrow of President Nkrumah in 1966. The period between 1966 and 1992 saw a series of military rules interspersed with brief civilian regimes. This period witnessed a decline in socio-economic growth and political discourse as press freedom was non-existent. The beginning of the 1990s however saw a shift in the political system with a return to democratic rule in 1992 and the promulgation of a new constitution. Ghana has since experienced political stability with six successful presidential and parliamentary elections. Freedom of speech as well as independence of the media is also guaranteed under the constitution. The successful democratic rule has often been used as an example of successful and political economic reforms in Africa by the World Bank and the USA.

On the economic front, Ghana's economy is steadily growing after witnessing a decline in the last three years. An IMF report released in April 2016 estimated Ghana's per capita income to be US\$1,340.4 up from the initial US\$1,266.1 in 2008, an increase of 5.9 percent over the period. Ghana is currently the world's second largest producer of cocoa, behind its neighbour Cote d'Ivoire, and is blessed with rich mineral resources including, gold, diamonds, manganese ore, and bauxite. In 2010 Ghana started oil production which helped to boost economic growth. As at 2006, Ghana's domestic economy revolved around agriculture, accounting for about 60 percent of the country's workforce and about 50 percent of GDP (Blankson, 2009: 186). As at the end of 2015 however, the agricultural sector was contributing a mere 26.9 percent to the GDP with

the services sector contributing 54.1 percent, even though the agric sector still has the largest workforce (Mensah, 2016).

The media landscape in Ghana has grown tremendously in the last decade. Previously, Ghana could boast of only the state owned media houses, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (both TV and radio), the Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times. Ghana currently enjoys media plurality. As at September 2016, a total of 452 radio stations had been given authorisation to operate (with 354 currently operational) while 75 TV stations had authorisation to operate. The number of newspapers in Ghana is estimated to be more than 300. The freedom guaranteed by the 1992 constitution has emboldened the media to speak on issues as governments are held accountable (Osei, 2016). These factors have largely influenced the growth of PR in Ghana.

3.6.2. The Landscape of Modern Public Relations in Ghana

As noted in chapter one (see section 1.5), Ghana, like the rest of Africa (with the exception of South Africa and Kenya), does not have a well document history of how PR developed, a fact acknowledged by Blankson (2009: 186). The few writings (mostly dissertations) on this subject used the writings of Nartey (1998) and Gyan (1991), who appear to have done a bit of work on the practice of PR in Ghana. However, as it has been widely acknowledged, PR in Ghana, as it is in the various African countries, has its roots in ancient beginnings (see section 3.5). Nartey (1998) argues that PR practice in Ghana cannot be linked to the coming of the colonialists, and the practice existed in another form long before Colonialism. Communication activities were carried out through the chief linguist at the chief's palace, the talking drum, proverbs, traditional protocols, and other gadgets. Joseph Allotey-Pappoe (in a speech delivered during a public lecture at the University of Education, Winneba, in 2009) conceptualised PR practice in Ghana into four main periods. These are:

- *Pre-colonial traditional society up to 1482*: This is an era dubbed as the initial creation of a 'system of PR consciousness.' The culture was understood by the use of proverbs, drum language, traditional protocol through the linguist, festivals, and a traditional conflict resolution system.
- *From 1482 to 1956 was an era known as the Colonial and Pre-Independence period*. It was dominated by the Nationalist Protest Movements, the setting up

of the Information Services Department, the emergence of indigenous private newspapers and the establishment of PR units by multinationals operating in the country e.g. CFAO, UNILEVER etc.

- *The period from 1957-1990 was called the Post-Independence era.* This period was characterised by the active role of the External Service Unit of the Ghana Broadcasting Service in Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's "Africanisation" policy, the establishment of the Ghana Institute of Journalism to train journalists and PR practitioners, the growth of PR units in state institutions such as the Ghana Publishing Corporation, GOIL, and State Farms. There was also the formation in 1972 of a loose association of PR practitioners known as the Public Relations Association of Ghana (PRAG).
- *The final era spanned from the period 1990 to present and is captured as the Growth of PR.* In 1991, the PRAG was reorganised into a professional body, adopted its own Code of Ethics and Constitution and was renamed the Institute of Public Relations, Ghana. PR education evolved from being pursued at the diploma level to be read at the degree, post graduate diploma and master's level as many more communications training institutions began to spring up. PR accreditation exams began in 1992. The annual PR week, the flagship programme of the Institute of Public Relations, Ghana (IPR, Ghana), was introduced in 1992.

Going by the outline given by Allotey-Pappoe, it is clear that PR followed the same stage as that of other countries. For instance, the first stage, which looks at the use of drums, proverbs, and other protocols, can be compared to that of the activities of Alexander the Great, Julius Ceaser and other nations who used some of these crafts to induce favourable public opinion. The second stage saw the use of PR by nationalists in the fight for independence. The post-independence era saw the use of PR to influence public opinion as realised in the 'Africanisation' policy of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. PR comes of age in the final era as a result of democratic changes and globalisation. PR becomes more formalised and gradually moves towards professionalism. It was at this time that the IPR, Ghana, the flagship body of PR in Ghana, was established.

Gyan (in Blankson, 2009: 186) attributes the beginning of the practice of modern PR to the activities of the British colonial administration. PR activities by then were performed mainly by British and European expatriates practitioners. The job of these expatriates included performing communication services and serving as sources of information for the colonial administration as well as serving as spokespersons for the multinational companies operating in Ghana at the time. After independence in 1957, the new government headed by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah started the process of replacing all expatriate administrators in key government sectors with locals. The Ghana Information Services Department (ISD) became the sole provider of information, press, and PR services for government, including communication activities of ministries and departments. The ISD officers were called “press secretaries” or “information officers”. They were attached to the various government ministries to play PR roles. Just like the beginning of PR in the western world, practitioners were mainly journalists. The action by the Nkrumah government did not go unnoticed as the multinational companies followed swiftly by making changes of their own. Several of these companies started filling some of their management positions with locals. A number of people, who were mostly from diverse educational backgrounds, were recruited to serve as press or information officers in a number of companies, both local and foreign. The recruitment of journalists however created a problem as PR was eventually seen as being synonymous with journalism. The situation eventually resulted in the establishment of Ghana’s first communication institute, the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), a name it still goes by today, to train PR officers.

The establishment of the PRAG in 1971 further enhanced the profession’s growth. Herman Alah, an early practitioner, and a group of practicing and retired journalists have been credited with the establishment of the association (Osam, 1989; Turkson, 1986, in Blankson, 2009: 187). The activities of the association and the increased recognition they received, especially from foreign PR practitioners and associations, began to rub off on society as businesses, organisations, educational institutions, and not-for-profit organisations gradually started establishing PR departments.

The expected rapid growth however did not occur as a series of turmoils and inactivity affected the association and subsequent development of the practice. The 1970s and 1980s were marked by a series of political and economic crises, tight government control of media and the suppression of freedom and this affected the development of

PR practice. During this time, PR was mainly used to promote the agenda of the governments and enhance a positive image for the government, especially the military regimes. Press freedom was either non-existence or quasi-liberal depending on whether it was a military or civilian government. The PR industry was forced to follow these shifts and thus tailored their activity to suit the government of the day. Practitioners started using financial and material incentives as a means of getting access to the state owned media. These were paid to either government officials or journalists. PR was thus not respected in Ghana as a result of such methods.

Before the mid-1990s, the PR industry in Ghana was male dominated with twenty-three men to three women. Only 53 percent had some university education. The majority of the practitioners occupied low to mid-level positions and had little or no power in the decision-making process. Practitioners largely performed the technician role, performing press agency, publicity and protocol roles as well as engaging in media monitoring, speech and report writing, organising and attending meetings, and sometimes dealing with complaints from the public (Boakye-Agyekum, 1992; Osam, 1989, in Blankson, 2009: 188).

Ghana began the process of institutionalising democratic rule in the early 90s. This was mainly because of pressure from international donors, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as the academic community in Ghana. The implementation of democratic and liberalisation policies gradually paid off as Ghana started experiencing multiparty democracy, political stability, and economic growth. The media landscape in Ghana was not left out as the country witnessed a proliferation of media houses. This was made possible by the 1992 constitution which clearly delineated the independence of the media. This new found freedom meant that the media could not be censored any longer and were free to do their work. Freedom of speech was guaranteed. The impact of democratic development and economic growth positively affected the growth of the PR profession. After a series of seminars, meetings and fora, PRAG, which had almost gone under the radar, metamorphosed under the new name the IPR, Ghana, with a new constitution and Code of Ethics in 1992. The association was formerly registered under the Professional Bodies Registration Decree, (NRCD 143) of 1973 (Otchere-Daflabge, 2009). The association undertook a number of initiatives to make itself relevant, including:

- Redefining its mission to focus on promoting professionalism among practitioners and improving the image of PR in the country;
- Educating management and the public about what PR is and what its roles are in the emerging democracy;
- Establishing proper educational standards and professional criteria for practicing PR;
- Seeking legal recognition as the professional body responsible for all PR practitioners in Ghana;
- Defining what constitutes the body of knowledge in PR in the country and setting standards for PR practice and conduct; and
- Preventing people from practicing PR without the necessary education and professional training.

To streamline the activities of practitioners and weed out the unqualified ones and to also conform to international standards, IPR instituted membership and accreditation examinations and also managed to get parliamentary approval to enforce by-laws and prevent those who were not qualified from presenting themselves as practitioners.

The training of PR professionals is also raising the standard of the practice in Ghana. The last decade has seen a flagship of universities, both foreign and local, opening departments of communication studies to train students in the area of PR, advertising, and journalism. With the exception of the GIJ the only other institution offering communication studies was the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, and even then this was at the master's level. In 2002 the first private communication school, the Africa Institute of Journalism and Communication (now Africa University College of Communication - AUCC) was established to cater for the growing demand for communication professionals and also introduce more professionals into the system. Currently Ghana has more than a dozen universities/colleges offering communication at the undergraduate and master's level. This includes foreign colleges that have established campuses in Ghana.

At the corporate level, PR, mainly referred to as corporate communications in most organisations, is quickly becoming a major part of organisations. The political stability and economic growth has attracted foreign investment into various sectors of the economy, including the financial, extractive, and telecommunication sectors. Organisations such as Vodafone, Tullow Oil, Goldfields, MTN, and Unilever, have

been operating in the country for many years. The activities of these organisations require that they develop effective communication strategies to develop and maintain relationships with their stakeholders, including the government of the day. Ghanaian practitioners have been at the forefront of the communication activities of these organisations. During the 2000 IPR week conference in Accra, the following observations were made by two key speakers:

The current business climate in Ghana demands that we [Ghanaian practitioners] attach greater importance to inter-corporate communications, both local and foreign. More importantly, we have to re-examine the way we have done business in the past and probably adopt the western-style, two-way communication and relationship building practices.

And

Events in recent times had instilled in almost all organisations a sense of obligation to give public relations its rightful place. Success of any corporate body depends largely on the public's perception of it and also the kind of relationship that exists between the organisation and its publics (Blankson, 2009: 190).

Ghana's PR is therefore developing at a phenomenal rate with most practitioners now at the managerial level. The level of professionalism has increased tremendously as practitioners work to establish relationship between the organisation and stakeholders. Ming-Yi and Baah-Boakye (2007: 23) conclude that professionalism in PR practice in Ghana is steadily improving and is mainly influenced by globalisation. A significant factor in the growth of PR was the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1994.

The introduction of media pluralism created competition in the media landscape. PR practitioners now have a variety of channels through which to link the organisation to the publics and vice versa. Practitioners now engage in media monitoring activities and advice management based on the changes in the environment. The advancement of technology is seen as an opportunity for PR in Ghana to further develop. Practitioners can now reach diverse audiences and further expose their organisations

to the wider world. But this also requires that practitioners upgrade their skills and are in tune with the technological changes and how they can take advantage of these to further develop.

Despite the tremendous growth of the profession, PR in Ghana still suffers from negative perception from the Ghanaian public. Some still equate the profession with propaganda and corruption. In some organisations PR is placed under the marketing departments and practitioners are mostly given smaller budgets and have a small staff. Regardless of these challenges, PR practice in Ghana is steadily growing. More and more organisations are hiring practitioners at the managerial level. Moreover, the influx of foreign PR agencies such as Ogilvy and Martha to compete with the local PR agencies is improving the profession. As the country's democratic stature continues to rise and the economy flourishes, the PR profession will continue to flourish (Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2009: 83).

3.6.3. PR roles in Ghana

The current body of literature on PR roles has very little information on the roles performed by practitioners in Ghana. The few studies available are mainly master's dissertations that look at the functions of PR in organisations. This makes the discussion on roles research, especially from the Ghanaian perspective, difficult. Again, no attempt has been made to codify the practice with a Ghanaian identity like the strategist role of South Africa. The little literature available mainly looks at the manager and technician roles with nothing at all on whether the strategist role also occurs in Ghana.

Ming-Yi and Baah-Boakye (2006: 655), in their research on *Profile of public relations practice in Ghana: Practitioners' roles, most important skills for practitioners, relationship to marketing, and gender equality*, posited that most PR practitioners performed the managerial roles in their organisations. Most of the practitioners surveyed responded positively that they were part of the decision-making body. This was a significant improvement from the earlier research by Gyan (1991) which suggested roles of practitioners were at the technician level. Gyan (2014: 29-30) discovered that PR roles based on gender were the same. This means that there was no discrimination of roles based on a practitioner's gender. She found that roles performed were a mixture of managerial and technician. PR practice in private higher

education institutions usually follows the technician role (specifically media relations) with a little bit of management activities.

Most PR managers in private universities in Ghana are not part of management and are seen as implementers of decisions rather than partakers (Dornyo & Adiku, 2015: 37). Those who are part of management are however not part of the dominant coalition, that is, the highest decision-making body of the institution (Narteh, Akwensivie & Agyapong, 2013: 175; Boakye, Nsor & Tabi, 2012: 35-36). The above discussion is an indication that not much has been done in determining the actual roles that practitioners in Ghana perform and how these roles affect the management view of PR. If the current study is to effectively develop the appropriate framework for PR practice in the financial sector, then this gap will need to be addressed.

3.7. SUMMARY

The chapter discussed the development of PR by reviewing literature on the subject. It was based on the key research objective of investigating how PR was practiced. The chapter reviewed the development and practice of PR from two main perspectives. The first phase discussed the historical development of PR from the North American, European and African perspectives, whereas the second phase reviewed the various models that reflected the practice of PR on these three continents. In reviewing these perspectives, the American and European models and roles had some similarities and differences, some of which have been clearly enumerated in the discussions above. Though the European models have different names from that of the American models, the orientation however reflects the same thing. The information model, for instance, is a reflection of the public information model while the persuasion model reflects the asymmetric model. The relationship and dialogue models reflect the symmetric models. Interestingly, the models in Europe do not take cognisance of the press agency/publicity model. Indeed, Van Ruler and Verčič (2005: 251), as stated earlier, strongly believe that all major communication theories, including Grunig's models, can be subsumed under the European models.

The European models, unlike the American models, however put a lot of emphasis on ethical communication and societal legitimisation as a means of achieving organisational goals. Whereas the American model views the symmetrical model as

the best model for PR practice, the Europeans do not ascribe such attributes to any of the models. European practitioners believe that the use of a particular model is dependent on the situation, hence one model cannot be said to be better than the other. One also notices that Europeans consider PR as being more than just establishing relationship. The discussion, as outlined above, shows PR is viewed more as dealing with the “public sphere”, that is, activities that show public relevance and societal acceptance of organisational activities. The reflective model, which is an addition to the four previous models from Europe, therefore reflects these differences.

There are also similarities and differences regarding the roles perspectives. The reflective and managerial role of Europe, for instance reflect the manager role of America while the operational role is viewed as a reflection of the technician role. One fundamental difference though is the *educational role*, which appears to be found within the European sphere only. The similarities are also seen in the European roles (*reflective, managerial and operational*) and the South African roles (*strategist, manager and technician*), at least at the theoretical level (Steyn, 2003: 25). The African PR role is based on a high concern for societal issues in the quest to gain legitimacy. Dialogue is therefore used as a means of gaining societal trust. This is clearly a reflective perspective but is referred to as the strategist role from the African perspective. There is also no clear distinction between the manager/technician roles (Van Heerden & Rensburg, 2005: 85).

One of the key issues discussed was the influence of the African culture in the practice of the profession. This was looked at from the perspective of the communal nature of African communication as it is reflected in the Bantu word “ubuntu”. The understanding of the PR environment in Africa and Ghana must be placed in the proper context in order to understand how the profession works. The chapter concluded with the development of PR in Ghana. The history of Ghana was discussed as well as the various stages of PR development in Ghana and its current status. The next chapter discusses the methodology to be followed in the data gathering process.

Overall, the discussion highlighted a number of key issues in relation to the development and practice of PR. These issues include the following:

- The practice of PR is based on different philosophical orientations even among western scholars.

- Whereas conceptualisation and practice of PR is based on symmetry and relationship management in America, the European practice is focused on gaining societal acceptance through socially responsible behaviour.
- The models that influence PR practice continue to attract scholarly attention as practitioners debate their viability in other jurisdictions.
- Interestingly, the models of PR practice in Europe do not appear to have attracted much attention from scholars outside of Europe or even in America.
- There is a general agreement among critics of the four models that the two-way symmetrical model cannot be assumed to be a one-size fits all model for effective PR.
- Knowledge of PR practice in Africa is severely limited.
- There is a lack of African framework that defines the practice of PR on the continent.
- Discussions on PR practice hardly features voices from non-western countries. Other countries are therefore forced to contribute to knowledge using western perspectives.
- PR roles between Europe and America differ in terms of their orientation.
- There is no common body of knowledge on the uniqueness of PR roles in Africa. PR roles verified have mainly been from the American perspective. Significantly, there appears to be very little or nothing on whether the European roles also affect the practice of PR in Africa.
- Culture plays a key role in the practice of PR in non-western countries.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this research is applied communication research as it seeks to examine issues that are practical in nature. The research seeks to understand how public relations (PR) is practiced and the factors that influence such practices. The overall goal of the research is to develop a framework that will guide the practice of PR in the financial services sector in Ghana. The following objectives underlined the research: *to investigate how PR is conceptualised by means of literature review; to determine how PR is conceptualised and practiced by practitioners in the financial services sector; to analyse the views of Ghanaian PR practitioners in the financial services sector about the selected models; and to analyse the PR roles practitioners in the financial services sector are engaged in.*

The current chapter discusses the research methods for the study. A research method deals with the various research techniques to be used in the data gathering process (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 117). This includes methods to be considered in gathering, analysing, and interpreting the data in line with the research questions raised. Since this is an applied research, which is aimed at developing a solution for a problem under investigation, methods concerned with the collection of data related to the subject will be identified and discussed as such (Kothari, 2004: 8). The chapter will discuss the nature of the research design and the appropriate research design that will be used. This will include how data will be gathered at the secondary level as well as the primary level. Thorough discussion of the semi-structured interview method, since it is the key method of data collection, will also be done. The sampling technique, which consists of the sampling population, the sampling method, and the sampling size, will also be explained. Discussion will centre on how the population will be selected, including the process of selection. A discussion on the method of data collection will follow. The appropriate method for the research will be discussed at length. The chapter also discusses the interview procedure, the interview guide, as well as the means by which the data will be analysed. Discussion on how the reliability

and validity of the qualitative data will be determined is also discussed with issues of ethical consideration concluding the chapter.

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design consists of the techniques and plans to gather data that is valid and reliable. The process involves determining the respondents or unit(s) involved as well as the place of study. The research design is a structure that shows how the various parts of the project - samples, measures, and methods of data gathering - come together in an attempt to address the research problem (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012: 189; du Plooy, 2009: 85; Trochim, 2006). Harwell (2011: 148) on the other hand posits that a research design can be looked at in two ways. On one hand it can reflect the entire research process, from problem conceptualisation to the literature review, research questions, methods, and conclusion. Alternatively, it can be viewed from just the methodological perspectives by describing the specific methods to be used in the data gathering process (data collection and analysis). Despite the variations in the definitions of the research design, its role in promoting rigorous examination of issues remains the same. This chapter focuses on the latter aspect of the definition, that is, how the data will be collected and analysed. If the researcher is to view the research design from the definition that Harwell (2011: 148) gave, that is, consisting of the entire research process, then it can be assumed that the previous chapters covered that aspect of the research design. The current chapter will therefore show the various techniques that will be used in the gathering and analysing of data.

Black (2012: 108-9) notes that in selecting the appropriate design for a research project, the researcher must first know what he/she wants to achieve. In other words, knowledge about what the researcher wants to be able to communicate - whether to gain a deep or broad, but less deep, understanding of a phenomenon being studied and whether the research will be used by policymakers or others to shape social life and so on - is essential in shaping the research design. Gravetter and Forzano (2012: 190) also suggest that making a decision about which research design to use requires three things, namely whether the study will involve groups or individual participants, whether it will make comparisons within a group or between groups, and how many variables will be included in the study.

Traditionally there are two main types of research design, qualitative and quantitative. However, over the years there has been a strong debate over the best method to use in data collection. This debate eventually led to the rapid development of a third method, the mixed method, which combines the two traditional methods in ways that attempt to bridge the gap in the differences while addressing a research question (Harwell, 2011: 151). Creswell (2014: 3) and Hesse-Biber (2016: 3) advance these approaches to research when they suggest that the three approaches are not really as different from each other as they may appear. The authors note that qualitative and quantitative approaches ought to be viewed as representing different ends on a continuum rather than being viewed as rigid, distinct categories, polar opposites, or dichotomies. Within the continuum is the mixed method which incorporates elements of the qualitative and quantitative methods.

The approach selected by a researcher is dependent on the overall goals of the research and the specific questions derived from the overall methodology. The purpose of quantitative research is essentially to test hypothesis or theories through the examination of relationships between variables using a set of data gathering instruments and analysing such data using statistical procedures. Quantitative research attempts to generalise its findings and is devoid of the researcher's personal opinions (Creswell, 2014: 3; Harwell, 2011: 150; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 14). The mixed method consists of the collection, analysis, and integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches in a study. The mixed method approach uses distinct categories that may consist of philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. That is to say the combination of the qualitative and quantitative ensures a broader and a more complete understanding of the research problem than when either approach is used separately (Cresswell, 2014: 3; Harwell, 2011: 151; Hesse-Biber, 2010: 3).

The study used the qualitative research approach, especially as the goal of the research was exploratory. Exploratory research allows a researcher to examine a phenomenon in detail by engaging practitioners who are knowledgeable about a topic or process. Exploratory research also occurs when a researcher investigates a new area of interest or when the phenomenon being studied itself is of relative interest (Sue & Ritter, 2012: 2; Babbie, 2011: 92). As exploratory research is usually qualitative in

nature, the qualitative approach was therefore seen as appropriate for the research. The next section will briefly discuss the qualitative approach.

4.2.1. Qualitative research design

A qualitative approach or method is used to explore and understand meanings ascribed to social issues. Qualitative research seeks to examine and interpret observations in order to discover underlying meanings and patterns of relationship in a non-numerical way (Creswell, 2014: 4; Babbie, 2011: 394). Harwell (2011: 148). Creswell (2014:4) articulates that the purpose of the qualitative approach is to discover and understand experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants. The qualitative approach therefore examines meaning, purpose, or reality. In qualitative research, detailed information on a topic of interest is collected through a number of techniques such as case studies, interviews, and content analysis. Du Plooy (2009: 30, 88) also notes the purpose of the qualitative approach is to “interpret and construct the qualitative aspects of communication experiences,” and that the main objective of qualitative design is to “explore areas where limited or no prior information exists and/or to describe behaviours, themes, trends, attitudes, needs, or relations that are applicable to the units analysed.”

At its core is the process of ‘interaction’ between the researcher and participants in a natural setting, resulting in a flexible and open research process. This process allows the researcher to obtain different results from the same participants, what Lincoln and Guba (in Harwell, 2011: 148) call “multiple truths.” According to Hesse-Biber (2016: 3), the qualitative approach offers a unique position by which a researcher can ask questions in a particular way and provide greater perspectives on the social issues or problems. In effect, the qualitative researcher looks for ‘meaning’, that is, the “social meaning people attribute to their experiences, circumstances, and situations, as well as the meanings people embed into texts, images, and other objects.” Qualitative research is especially suitable in addressing a research problem whereby the variables are not well known and literature about the phenomenon is very scarce hence, the need to learn from participants through exploration (Creswell, 2012: 16). Boeije (2010: 11) sums it up in the following statement:

The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. The research

questions are studied through flexible methods enabling contact with the people involved to an extent that is necessary to grasp what is going on in the field. The methods produce rich, descriptive data that need to be interpreted through the identification and coding of themes and categories leading to findings that can contribute to theoretical knowledge and practical use.

Qualitative research therefore aims to discover meaning from the perspective of participants based on how they see their social worlds and to understand their experiences. PR practitioners are likely to conceptualise the practice of PR based on the experiences they have garnered over the years working in the financial sector. The flexibility that the qualitative approach affords the researcher will ensure that data gathered is rich and detailed. This ties in with the inductive approach which suggests that the lack of knowledge beforehand of the kind of data that will be gathered and what the frame of analysis will look like allows for improvisation, creativity, and flexibility (Boije, 2010: 13).

The purpose of this research is to develop a framework that will guide the practice of PR in Ghana. In this regard, it is essential to generate meaning based on practitioners' experiences in the field.

4.2.2. Sources of data

In chapter one, a series of research objectives were formulated in order to appropriately address the issue under investigation. The objectives were to be addressed from two phases. The first phase was to gather data by means of literature review, and secondly, to verify the literature by means of empirical data. The literature review phase is referred to as secondary data while empirical data collection is regarded as the primary data. Primary data/source essentially deals with a first hand or main accounts of an issue under investigation and is gathered through data collection methods including surveys, interviews, observations, and experiments, whereas secondary data/sources are supportive data collected to aid the primary data. Secondary sources provide relevant analysis of data found in primary sources including books, journals, dissertations, reports, speeches and so on (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 186; du Plooy, 2009: 62).

The purpose of the literature review, as summarised in chapter 2 and 3, was to review relevant data on the practice of PR across the world. Of particular concern was determining how PR was conceptualised and practiced in terms of the roles (activities) and models (purpose). In order to do this, secondary sources relevant to understanding the problem under investigation were used. The secondary sources enabled the researcher to further understand the research problem and put it under the proper perspective. Several sources were consulted as a means of gaining insight into the issue under investigation, including journals, textbooks, unpublished theses and dissertations from a number of universities, conference proceedings, and speeches. Of particular interest was reviewing the factors that influence PR practice in other regions such as Europe and America and determining whether these factors also play out in Africa and Ghana.

Several sources on PR as conceptualised and practiced in other regions were available. However, with the exception of South Africa, there was a paucity of literature on the rest of the African continent, including Ghana. Although insight has been gained into the conceptualisation and practice of PR on the continent through the works of some African practitioners (Kiambi, 2012; Le Roux, 2010; Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2009, 2008; Nabuukeera, 2006; Rensburg & Van Heerden, 2005; Van Heerden, 2004; Steyn, Green & Grobler, 2001; Steyn, 1999), there is very little, if any, to suggest that the same situation pertains to Ghana. Based on the findings of the literature the study aimed at empirically verifying how PR is practiced with a focus on the models and roles performed by practitioners within the financial services sector. This was done through the qualitative approach which describes meanings attached to communication experiences and generates multiple 'truths' (du Plooy, 2009: 35).

4.3. DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study was gathered through the semi-structured interview method. The semi-structured interview method is one of the key methods of the qualitative approach. Interviews in general are used to explore communication experiences, attitudes, and behaviours of participants. Interviews ensure a one-on-one discussion between the researcher and the research participant (Rubin, RB., Rubin, AM., Haridakis & Piele, 2010: 219). Interviews allow the researcher to ask open-ended

questions. This allows participants to voice their experiences through open-ended responses through *why* and *how come* questions (Creswell, 2013: 163). Galletta (2013: 2) states that:

the semi-structured interview typically reflects variation in its use of questions, prompts, and accompanying tools and resources to draw the participant more fully into the topic under study. Semi-structured interviews incorporate both open-ended and more theoretically driven questions, eliciting data grounded in the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs in the particular discipline within which one is conducting research.

What this means is that the semi-structured interview goes beyond the quantitative approach of the '*what*' by gathering a wealth of information about the participants' experiences and generating meaning. In the context of this research, the semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to explore a phenomenon about which there is little information in the country by gaining insight into how PR was conceptualised and practiced as well as the factors that influenced the nature of the practice. This agrees with the views of Daymon and Holloway (2011: 220) who suggest that interviews serve as a useful technique for exploring the views and perceptions of various stakeholders and publics. The nature of semi-structured interviews is such that they are quite flexible and ensure the researcher has a deeper understanding of the perspectives of the participants. Ultimately, the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee evolves since the interviewer has the freedom to further engage the interviewee if something of interest emerges.

Before the interview can be conducted, it is essential to know how the sample will be determined/drawn and the nature of the measuring instrument to be used. The next section discusses the sampling technique as well as instrument development.

4.4. SAMPLING

A sample simply refers to a selected group or messages purposefully selected to represent the population from which it is drawn. It refers to the group from which a researcher wants to draw a conclusion after the study. Sampling, especially in qualitative research, allows researchers to have a deeper understanding of a problem under study (Black, 2012: 168-169; Stacks, 2011: 197). Sampling is necessary in a

research study because of the inherent constraints of time and resources associated with studying an entire population. Any attempt to study an entire population may also be problematic in terms of cost and could confound the research since measurement of a large population tends to affect the quality of measurement (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 87).

Sampling consists of two broad categories, probability and nonprobability. Probability sampling allows the researcher to generalise the result of the research to the population from which it is drawn. Probability uses random sampling techniques and uses statistical methods to achieve generalisation. Nonprobability on the other hand does not allow for generalisation but is nevertheless critical in exploring issues in greater depth. Unlike probability, nonprobability does not follow the guidelines of mathematical rules. Hence, the goal of using nonprobability is not to achieve statistical generalisation. Sampling techniques in qualitative research require a different approach to that of quantitative. Since the focus of qualitative is not to generalise in a statistical or random sense, using probabilistic sampling may not be important or even justifiable.

Qualitative approach to sampling is purposeful, that is, it is deliberate and based on the purpose of the problem under investigation (Boeije, 2010: 35; Merriam, 2009: 77; Daymang & Holloway, 2011: 209). Morgan (2008: 797) therefore notes that samples in qualitative research must be judged based on their ability to serve the purpose of the problem being investigated rather than by criteria that apply to other goals. Because qualitative research focuses on inductive theory building, subjective understanding, and detailed, holistic data, it can only be met through intensive investigation of small, systematically selected samples (Morgan, 2008: 797-798). Sampling in qualitative research therefore does not focus on replication in a wider population but rather attempts to represent a wide variety of experiences and perspectives (Ziebland & McPherson, in Boeije, 2010: 36).

The development of the sampling technique consists of a series of steps which will be discussed below.

4.4.1. Defining the research population

Before determining the other sampling techniques, it is important to determine the target population for the study. In research, population refers to the set of individuals or group with a common characteristic that the researcher needs. A population consists of the entire group of interest from which the researcher selects a sample to study. A sample is therefore a subset of a population (Adler & Clarke, 2010: 102; Saumure & Given, 2008: 644). The target population to participate in the study consisted of senior PR practitioners from selected organisations within the financial services sector in Ghana.

4.4.1.1. Selecting the target population

Before the selection of the sample, it is important to determine how to find the population; that is, the sampling frame needs to be identified. Ideally practitioners would have been selected from registered members of the national PR association, the Institute of Public Relations (IPR, Ghana). However, not every practitioner is a member of the IPR and this made it difficult to get an accurate list or to use it as a sampling frame. Again, the list of registered members is made up of people who are not actual practitioners but are there as honorary members or journalists who are members of the association. A review of the list also showed that the list, as it stands now, has not been updated mainly because members who had changed jobs or profession had either not updated their records with the association or were not active members. This made the IPR list unreliable.

Since the research was within the financial services sector, it was easy for the researcher to narrow down the target population. The financial sector consisted of banks and non-banking (insurance, microfinance, and capital markets) institutions. Details of the various organisations were obtained from the website of relevant organisations such as the Bank of Ghana and the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC). These websites contain updated information on the various sectors. Senior PR practitioners from the targeted institutions were contacted first via telephone to book an appointment with them. This was followed by a formal letter to the selected institutions to get their permission to conduct the research.

4.4.2. Selecting the sampling type

For the purpose of this study, the nonprobability, specifically the purposive sampling technique, was employed to select the participants for the study. Purposive or purposeful sampling is regarded as the most common form of qualitative sampling and is premised on the supposition that the researcher can discover new things and gain an understanding of the issue under study and therefore requires a sample that he/she can learn the most from. Participants are selected based on their deep knowledge and experience of the issue under investigation (Merriam, 2009: 77). Purposive sampling allows cases or units to be specifically selected due to their ability to give detailed information about the issues that are important to the research. Patton (2002: 230) suggests that “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich* cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term *purposeful* sampling. In order to effectively use purposive sampling, it was vital to first determine the selection criteria needed to get the appropriate participants. Le Compte and Preissle (in Merriam, 2009: 77) call this *criterion-based selection*, whereby the researcher “creates a list of the attributes essential” to the study and then “proceeds to find or locate a unit matching the list.” The criteria determined for purposeful sampling therefore reflects the essence of the study and aid in the identification of information-rich cases. It is also important to indicate why the criteria are important. In the context of the current study purposive method allowed for the selection of PR practitioners who are experienced in the field and have a deeper understanding of the issue under investigation. Since the purpose of the research was also not to generalise but rather provide rich information on PR practice in Ghana, the purposive method was considered appropriate.

4.4.3. Determining the sample size

Sample size refers to the number of sources selected from a research population for the study. In most research, especially quantitative, the focus is on statistical generalisability. This has led to some criticisms about qualitative researchers since they do not use probability samples. These criticisms however, overlook the fact that small samples rarely have any practical value for generalisability (Morgan, 2008: 798).

Qualitative research puts emphasis on an in-depth and highly contextual understanding of specific phenomena and for that to happen one needs a small sample size. Qualitative samples are therefore much smaller than quantitative. Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003: 84) attribute this to three reasons:

- First, if the data is properly analysed, there will come a point where very little new evidence is obtained from each additional fieldwork unit. This is because phenomena need only to appear once to be part of the analytical map. There is therefore a point of diminishing return where increasing the sample size no longer contributes new evidence.
- Second, statements about incidence or prevalence are not the concern of qualitative research. There is therefore no requirement to ensure that the sample is of sufficient scale to provide estimates or to determine statistically significant discriminatory variables. This is in sharp contrast to survey samples which need to have adequately sized cells to draw statistical inference with the required precision.
- Third, the type of information that qualitative studies yield is rich in detail. There will therefore be many hundreds of 'bites' of information from each unit of data collection. In order to do justice to these, sample sizes need to be kept to a reasonably small scale. Finally, and related to this, qualitative research is highly intensive in terms of the research resources it requires. It would therefore simply be unmanageable to conduct and analyse hundreds of interviews, observations, or groups unless the researcher intends to spend several years doing so.

Small samples are used in qualitative research because of the principle of saturation (the point where no new information comes forth), the fact that frequencies are rarely needed in qualitative research since such research is more concerned with meaning instead of generalisation, and the fact that qualitative research produces a large amount of data and can be time consuming to analyse. Morgan (2008: 798) also agrees that qualitative researchers are justified in their use of saturation or redundancy in collecting data rather than trying to use probabilistic criteria as a standard for determining sample size. Merriam (2009: 80) also believes that the nature of the sample size is dependent on the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, and the resources the researcher has to support the study.

Daymon and Holloway (2011: 217) also add the number of researchers involved in the overall study. Lincoln and Guba (in Merriam, 2009: 80) argue for sampling until the researcher reaches the point of saturation or redundancy. "In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus, redundancy is the primary criterion." Patton (2002: 246) suggests specifying a minimum sample size "based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study."

Some authors suggest a sample size of six to eight with homogenous groups and twelve to twenty with heterogeneous groups. Qualitative sample size however tends to be made up of between four to 40 participants (Daymon & Holloway, 2011: 217). Ritchie et al (2003: 97) also assert that generally qualitative samples involving individual interviews in a single study are mostly below 50. Once they go beyond 50 they become difficult to manage as the quality of data collected and analysis can be compromised.

Mason (2010), after a review of a series of PhD dissertations that used qualitative approach, noted that most of the sample sizes used were between 20 and 30 with 40, 10 and 25 following respectively. Mason concluded that the average sample size per dissertation was 31. Crouch and McKenzie (2006: 483) further argue that a sample size less than 20 is sufficient to achieve validity since research based on interviews ultimately seeks to penetrate social life based on generating meaning and not appearance. Latham (2013) proposed that to ensure saturation occurs, a researcher must go beyond the point of saturation. He therefore proposes 15 as the minimum for qualitative interviews when the participants are homogenous groups. This supports Bertaux's (in Guest et al 2006: 61) earlier assertion that 15 participants should be the smallest acceptable sample size in all qualitative research. Latham (2014) found that saturation, for instance, occurred after interviewing 11 participants. This is consistent with the findings of Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006: 59) who found that saturation mostly occurs around 12 participants, especially among a homogeneous group.

To gather enough information to produce the right result a sample size of 22 PR/communication practitioners from organisations in the financial services sector

was selected. The researcher believed that using 22 participants was consistent with views raised by scholars.

4.4.4. Data collection methods

Data collection methods are tools or techniques used in the gathering of information about the subject under investigation. It refers to the various techniques used in the performance of a research operation. In qualitative research data is collected through words and consist of “direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge” obtained through interviews, “detailed descriptions of people’s activities, behaviours, actions” recorded in observations, and “excerpts, quotations, or entire passages” (Patton, 2002: 4).

Within qualitative research, one of the most common tools used for data collection is the in-depth interview method, also known as intensive interview. Interview simply refers to “a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study” (De Marrais, 2004: 55). Interviews mostly consist of a one-on-one encounter between the researcher and the research participant. Dexter (in Merriam, 2009: 88) describes it as “conversation with a purpose.” Damon and Holloway (2011: 220) suggest that interviewing goes beyond conversation; that it is largely dependent on the purpose and is based on some form of structure. The purpose and structure allow the researcher to move the conversation in a certain direction by asking most of the questions. Holstein and Gubrium, (in Daymon & Holloway, 2011: 220) contend that seeing interviews as merely “a pipeline for transmitting knowledge from informant to interviewer” is to limit their potential. Interviews therefore ought to be a collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee so that participants are able to express the topics and experiences that interest them. Patton (2002: 340-341) explains the purpose of interview in the following statement:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe.... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in

the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.

This means that interviews are necessary in situations where direct observations or even focus group will not be possible. Behaviour, feelings, and how people interpret the social world around them are things that cannot be directly observed. A key feature of interviewing is its flexibility. The flexibility affords the researcher the freedom to prompt the participants to further elucidate on an issue of interest.

The interview was used to gather information from the participants. The research used the semi-structured interview in the data gathering process. The semi-structured or less structured interview is part of three types (the other two being the highly structured/standardised and unstructured) of interviews. The semi-structured interview uses a combination of the structured and unstructured. It has a form of flexibility and the researcher is able to *deviate* and ask follow-up or probing questions based on responses of the participants (du Plooy, 2009: 198; Merriam, 2009: 90). The approach ensures the researcher produces a 'road map' of questions which the researcher uses throughout the interview (Adams, Khan, Raeside & White, 2007: 145). Although time consuming and highly dependent on the interviewing skills of the researcher, the semi-structured interview 'reflects variations in its use of questions, prompts, and accompanying tools and resources' to engage the participants fully on the issue through a mixture of open-ended and more theoretically driven questions (Galletta, 2013: 45). The semi-structured interview technique enabled the researcher to understand the various factors that influence PR practice within the selected organisations. Further insight was gained into how practitioners conceptualise and practice PR by understanding the various activities that underpin the practice as well as the models that influence such practice.

4.4.4.1. The Interview schedule

The researcher used an interview schedule or guide to gather data (See Addendum A: 337). An interview schedule contains a series of questions or instructions (both open-ended and closed-ended) that the researcher uses to collect data from participants. Open-ended questions allow participants to express themselves freely in their own words while closed-ended questions do not allow for free expression. In a

qualitative study, the use of the closed-ended question is very limited since the focus of qualitative interview is to generate a wealth of information. To ensure that participants are encouraged to provide more information while feeling at ease, the funnel interviewing approach was used. The funnel interviewing approach starts with questions about the topic before delving into more specific questions (Daymon & Holloway, 2011: 271; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 136). A series of general questions on broad issues relating to PR practice were asked to create rapport with the participants before specific questions regarding the practice of PR were posed.

4.4.4.2. The data gathering procedure

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 PR practitioners in the financial service sector. This consisted of both banking and non-banking financial institutions such as insurance companies and microfinance/savings and loans companies. Letters were sent to the organisations through the communication managers of these organisations. Before the letters were sent, the researcher made contact with the communication managers and discussed his intentions with them. Once they agreed to participate in the study, the researcher then sent a formal letter requesting permission to interview the communication directors of the organisation. Based on the directions given by the participants, the letters were addressed to the managing director/chief executive through the participants. The letter indicated the purpose of the study, what the outcome would be used for as well as observation of all ethical protocols including confidentiality and privacy. Letters were initially sent to over 30 financial institutions. The reason for this was that not all the organisations were likely to approve or grant the researcher the permission for varied reasons. Eventually, 15 organisations granted permission for the researcher to conduct the interviews with their corporate communication departments. Once permission was finally received, the letters were sent to the ethics committee for approval to go ahead and conduct the interviews.

A total of 22 participants were interviewed. This consisted of 15 heads and seven deputy managers. The interviews were conducted at the offices of the participants. The interviews took approximately 45 to 60 minutes to conduct. Participants were made aware that the interviews were likely to take 45 to 60 minutes. This was to allow

them to plan. Most of the participants requested the interview guide to enable them to prepare adequately and this was duly granted.

Prior to each interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants. They were then given the information sheet for them to read and satisfy themselves with each other's responsibility towards the interview, after which both the participant and the researcher signed the consent form. A copy of the consent form was given to the participants. Permission was then asked once again before audio-taping the interview. Once the interview was conducted, the researcher thanked the participant before leaving the office.

4.5.5. Data analysis and interpretation

Qualitative data analysis is often regarded as gruelling, demanding, and repetitive and therefore requires dynamism, intuitiveness, and creativity on the part of the researcher as well as the ability to think, reason, and theorise (Basit, 2003: 143). Data analysis in qualitative research focuses on analysing data through fragmentation and then merging them into various categories that relate conceptually and theoretically, and which make assumptions concerning the problem under study (Jones, 2007: 70). This process is referred to as 'decontextualising and recontextualising'. The decontextualising process starts with the removal of the text from the source through transcription with their meaning intact and then recontextualising by drawing meaning through a robust, context independent process. Adams et al (2007: 155) categorises qualitative analysis into five phases, namely the exploration phase (detect patterns in the data and identify deviants and oddities), classification phase (compare theory and identify groups), drawing conclusion phase (compare theory, compare and contrast groups), representation phase (construct a model), and a testing phase (test the model – validation). Daymon and Holloway (2011: 304) however categorise it into three phases:

- Data management and organisation: This is the initial process of carving up the mass of unwieldy data into manageable chunks by coding, memoing, and summarising them into patterns and configuration.
- Asking questions of the data: What is going on? Who says? Where and when is it happening?

- Interpretation: bringing meaning and insight to the words and acts of participants in the study by generating concepts and theories (or theory based generalisations) which explain the findings. The key question to ask and answer at this point is: 'So what does this finding mean in the light of the literature and the main research question?' The researcher then communicates the meaning of his/her findings to others through a written report.

Qualitative data analysis, essentially allows a researcher to critically examine and interpret observation in order to draw underlying meanings and patterns of relationship in a non-numerical way (Babbie, 2010: 394).

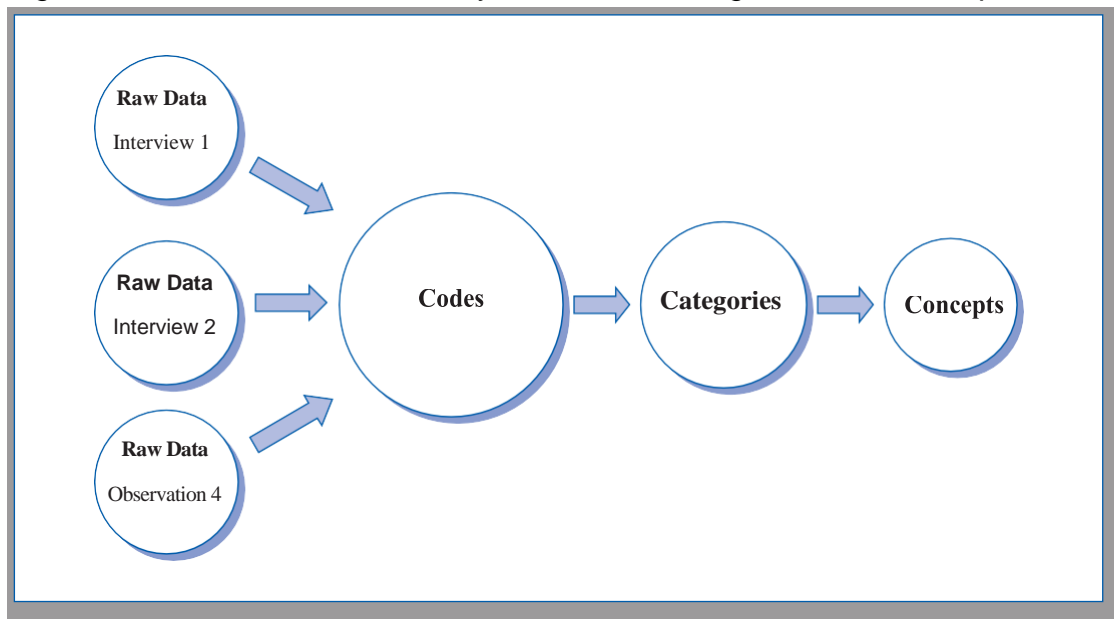
Qualitative data analysis can be analysed either through manual transcription or by the use of computer software. The current study utilised a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package. It must be noted that such software does not 'analyse' data as it is in quantitative analysis. Data analysis is purely the researcher's responsibility. The software however assists in managing the data and making it easier to analyse. This is emphasised by Bogdan and Biklen (2007: 187) who point out that the computer software serves as an organising or categorising tool and does not analyse the data for the researcher. Computer assisted software ensures easier, more flexible, accurate and comprehensive data management. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008: 430) are nevertheless of the view that such software programmes do not confirm or deny the scientific value or quality of qualitative research and should be perceived as merely instruments that are as good or bad as the researcher using them. Commenting on the usefulness of computer programmes, Seal (2013: 265-269) postulates that they support the researcher in searching through documents for particular features such as a word or phrase, code segments of data according to some conceptual scheme, as well as assist in the writing of analytic notes or memos which ensures that emerging ideas from the research materials are recorded in the right places.

Computer software programmes essentially allow qualitative data to be handled with speed, especially when dealing with a large volume of data, shows that conclusions are based on rigorous analysis, and facilitate development of consistent coding schemes during team research. There are a number of computer programmes available including Nvivo, Atlas.ti and so on. The researcher believed that the use of

the computer programme will assist in the quality management of the data gathered. The researcher was however, mindful of the limitations of computer text analysis. For example, using a computer programme without complimenting it with a word processor will make it difficult to manage the data. Using word processing software alongside CAQDAS is therefore highly recommended. Also, the researcher may have to spend some time familiarising him/herself with the software, and uploading data into the software can also be time consuming as some researchers have admitted (Rodik & Primorac, 2015: 18; Seale, 2013: 270). It is however effective as it ensures a reduction in human error and potential bias on the part of the researcher.

Once the data analysis was complete, the researcher then set forth the process of interpreting the data. Data interpretation in qualitative research refers to the process of creative insights into what has been found by way of meaning. Analysing the data alone is not enough. Meaning must be ascribed to the data by explaining what the data means. This is where the process of originality of the research is revealed (Daymon & Holloway, 2011: 302, 316). The researcher reviews the various analytics and compares and contrasts perceptions, experiences, or social realities and then looks for common themes and connections in order to properly explain the problem under study. Adams et al (2007: 161) categorise qualitative data analysis and interpretation under six main headings, namely *defining concepts, mapping range and nature of phenomenon, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies*. Likewise, Lichtman (2013: 252) identifies what she calls the “three Cs” of data analysis and interpretation: *Codes, Categories, and Concepts*. Figure 4.1 (below) describes the data analysis process:

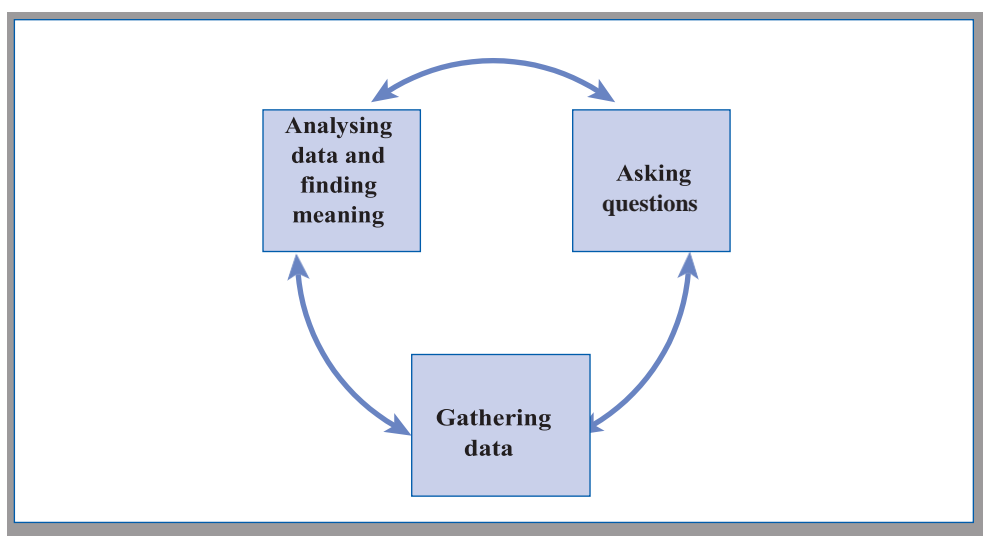
Figure 4.1: Three Cs of data analysis: Codes, Categories and Concepts



Source: Lichtman (2013) (Qualitative Research in Education: A user's guide)

Lichtman breaks this down into six steps: initial coding from responses to summary ideas of the responses, revisiting initial coding, developing an initial list based on additional re-reading, revisiting categories and subcategories, and moving from categories to concepts. This presupposes that in dealing with data analysis and interpretation it is important for the researcher to constantly review the data collected and the categorisation, and reviewing initial coding based on further evidence while removing others that may prove redundant. Others may be collapsed, renamed, and reorganised. The analysis and effective interpretation of data is an iterative process that requires the researcher to constantly revisit categories, identify critical elements and remove redundancies. The final process is where the researcher identifies key concepts that reflect meanings attached to the data. Lichtman (2013: 255) points out that generating meaning from qualitative data is an iterative process that moves between questions, data, and meaning. Figure 4.2 (below) shows a summary of the data analysis process as suggested by Lichtman:

Figure 4.2: Relationship between questions, data and meaning



Source: Lichtman (2013) (Qualitative Research in Education: A user's guide)

The researcher compared the findings to literature to determine any similarities or differences regarding how PR is conceptualised and practiced in a different setting. Comparing the result of the research with conclusions of the literature gathered allowed the researcher not only to preserve the social perspectives of the participants but also construe and confer his own understanding about the data analysed.

4.5. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The purpose of research is to generate a result that is credible, trustworthy and ethical. The ability of a research study to measure what it set out to measure or to show consistency (one that can be replicated) is critical for research scholars. However, the subjective nature of qualitative research and the small nature of the sample size mean ensuring trustworthiness becomes difficult. It is therefore critical for the researcher to ensure that there is consistency (reliability) and that the study measures what it intends to measure (validity). The result of the research must show that it can withstand rigorous scrutiny and thus achieve credibility (Daymon & Holloway, 2011: 318; Patton, 2002: 212). Conclusions drawn must be true to readers, practitioners, and researchers alike. Lincoln and Guba (2000: 178) make this point forcefully by asking whether the findings of a study is: "sufficiently authentic... that I may trust myself in acting on their implications? More to the point, would I feel sufficiently secure about these findings to construct social policy or legislation based on them?" Validity deals with the

element of truth, that is, the “extent by which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (Hammersley, in Silverman, 2013: 285). Validity therefore looks at the perceived credibility of the interpretation or meaning assigned to data. This is expressed by Peräkylä:

The validity of research concerns the interpretation of observations: whether or not the inferences that the researcher makes are supported by the data, and sensible in relation to earlier research (2011: 365).

Validity must therefore be based on truth and must pass a rigorous test to be regarded as credible. Reliability on the other hand refers to the “degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions” (Hammersley, in Silverman, 2013: 285). Meaning, can the result of a research be repeated with the same result? (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 270). As qualitative research deals with participants’ social construction of reality (how they understand the world around them), there are likely to be multiple constructions of reality from different participants. Again, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection, and analysis and interpretation of social reality is accessed mainly through observation and interviews. Scholars have emphasised the essence of ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001: 551; Cho & Trent, 2006: 320).

Various strategies have been developed to determine validity and reliability and thus demonstrate the quality of qualitative research. Hammersley (in Daymon & Holloway, 2011: 83-84) suggest that in order to show validity the study must indicate *relevance* - research must show meaningfulness and be useful for the researcher and readers as well as those to whom it is addressed, *plausibility* - claims made must be plausible, and *credibility* - achieving credibility through provision of convincing evidence. The criteria of *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* have also been promoted by researchers as a means of demonstrating quality in qualitative research. Authenticity is based on fairness, sharing of knowledge, and action although it is not as popular as trustworthiness (Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002: 2). Trustworthiness on the other hand is a well-known measure of reliability and validity promoted by Lincoln and Guba in the 1980s and is based on four main categories, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These will be discussed briefly.

Credibility: Credibility is the equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research in which the study measures what is actually intended. Credibility in qualitative research asserts that a study should be considered credible if the conclusions correspond with the views of the participants, that is, if participants believe the meaning generated reflects their own social context.

Transferability: In research, one of the key concerns is to show that the result can be applied to other settings. Transferability is like the notion of external validity or generalisability, which is “concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations” (Shenton, 2004: 69). Daymon and Holloway (2011:85) assert that transferability “replaces the notion of external validity, and is close to the idea of theory-based generalizability.” Since qualitative findings apply to a small population within a specific environment, it is not possible to show that the result can be applied to other settings and situations. The burden of proof therefore lies with the researcher to ensure that the reader is able to transfer the specific knowledge gained from the research to other settings and situations familiar to them (Daymon and Holloway, 2011:85). One way of doing this is through “thick description”. That is, providing narratives that is descriptive enough to allow readers to make informed decision about how the result links with their experiences, and drawing their own conclusions. Transferability can also be demonstrated by showing how the principles or models that emerged might be similar to that which is practiced in other settings.

Dependability: Dependability measures the degree to which the result is consistent. Quantitative researchers tend to employ techniques that demonstrate that if the work is repeated using the same methods and within the same context, the result will be the same. Lincoln and Guba (in Merriam, 2009: 221) however argue that dependability is not about whether the findings can be replicated but whether the results are consistent with the data collected. This means that the framework within which the research was carried out must be clearly outlined and in great detail. Daymon and Holloway (2011: 93) therefore suggest the need for every research study to have an “audit trail” that will allow others to follow the research process and be able to evaluate it, detailing the entire process by which the researcher arrived at the decision and providing evidence (raw data, field notes, data collection and analysis procedures) when necessary.

Confirmability: Shenton (2004: 72) describes confirmability as the qualitative researcher's answer to objectivity. What this essentially means is that the findings and conclusions drawn are based on the ideas and experiences of the participants and not the preconceptions or assumptions of the researcher. The researcher must therefore be able to link data to its sources so that any reader can establish a direct connection between the conclusion and the participants. It is therefore important to acknowledge methods adopted in arriving at your conclusion. Daymon and Holloway (2011: 86) refer to this as leaving a "decision trail".

4.6. ²ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

One of the most controversial issues to come under intense scrutiny among social science researchers is ethics, especially in qualitative research. As qualitative research puts emphasis on personal or close interaction with participants, many questions have been raised concerning protection of participants. Moreover, data gathering tends to take place in natural settings instead of in situations set up purposely for the research. Issues of confidentiality have been raised sometimes with a lack of agreement as to what exactly constitutes ethics and how participants can best be protected (Lichtman, 2013: 51; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012: 1; Flick, 2009: 36). As qualitative research deals with face-to-face interaction and is not based on statistical analysis, the demand for ethical consideration is even higher. In undertaking this study, ethical considerations were highlighted by the researcher. In developing a study of this nature, issues of informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and protection from harm were considered essential (Lewis, 2003: 62). Participants were given a statement to read and signed indicating their willingness to participate in the research. The informed consent contained all the necessary ethical issues, including permission to record, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity etc. This stance is supported by Daymon and Holloway (2011: 70) who acknowledge the essence of having a written consent form that includes some basic components such as name and credentials of researcher, research strategies and aims, expected duration of individual's participation, potential risks and benefits to the organisation or individuals, promise of anonymity and confidentiality, and steps through which these will be ensured, among others.

² See Addendum D for ethical clearance certificate.

Participants will be free to participate in the research and also have the right to give or withhold their cooperation (Daymon & Holloway, 2011: 65). The researcher believed that giving participants the freedom to cooperate or not will encourage open discussion and honest submissions. Participants in the research were not made to suffer any form of embarrassment or harm whether it be emotional, physical, or reputational. Harm is defined as “a setback to a person’s interest which includes any aspect of a person’s life that that person regards as important” (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004: 278). Because interviews can carry emotional risks for participants the researcher ensured that the procedures followed were just and fair to the participants.

The researcher also ensured that confidentiality was not breached. Data collected was handled with care in order to not expose participants or sensitive information that is regarded as private. Writing on confidentiality, Shils (in Hammersley & Traianou, 2012: 121) notes that:

.....the particular privacy which an individual suspends by making particular disclosures to another (in this case, the interviewer) must be reinstated by the treatment which the disclosed private information receives. The privacy should be restored by the obliteration of any connection with the person who disclosed it; this means that the interviewer must never disclose the connection to anyone, orally or in writing. The particular confidences must be respected; they must not be transmitted in their particular form and in their relationships to the particular individual to anyone else; they may be introduced into the public sphere only by generalisation and anonymity.

Shils clearly links confidentiality to privacy. Some of the data collected will be private and will need to be handled with utmost confidentiality, especially at the reporting stage, so as not to expose the participant. The element of confidentiality also ensured that no part of the report contained the identity of either the participants or their organisation unless with their express permission. To ensure this, the nature of the organisation (sector and activities) was discussed without necessarily divulging any information about a particular organisation. In analysing and reporting the data, the researcher ensured that the final work was a true reflection of the experiences and perspectives of research participants.

The researcher believed that when these ethical strategies are followed, it will lead to transparent and responsible research.

4.8. SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methodological approaches to be used in the gathering and analysing of the data. It clearly outlined the research design and methodology including the data collection techniques, sampling procedure and research population. The chapter concluded with discussion on ethical issues to be considered in the gathering, analysing, and interpretation of the final report.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

The financial services sector worldwide has been plagued with several scandals in the last decade mainly due to what Garcia and Garraza (2010: 179) describe as “dubious management” decisions. In a developing country like Ghana, there is a lack of trust in the financial sector due to recent scandals leading to collapse of several financial service institutions including banks, insurance companies, and microfinance/savings and loans companies, while the management of another bank has been handed to KPMG by the central bank to manage in order to save it from total collapse. The survival in the sector, especially the banking industry, has become even more challenging as they have to raise their minimum capital requirement to four hundred million Cedis (¢400m) by the end of 2018. There are suspicions that most of the banks, especially the local banks, will not be able to meet the deadline and may have to fold up or merge. These events have implications on PR practice in the financial services sector. Several attempts have been made by the sector to improve its reputation and its relationship with its key publics. Many of these attempts are unfortunately viewed as ‘cosmetic’ transformation as customers feel a form of mistrust towards the sector (Garcia & Garraza, 2010: 180). The work of PR practitioners has become even more complex in a competitive business environment as practitioners seek to develop strategies that will enhance reputation and improve relationships. Literature reviewed showed that the purpose of PR is to develop and maintain the relationship between an organisation and its publics through strategic means. that is to say, PR must be practiced symmetrically if it is to achieve its purpose.

In line with the research goal of developing a PR framework for the financial services sector in Ghana, the current chapter presents and discusses the result of the empirical research conducted on the current practice of PR in relation to the roles (activities) and models (purpose).

The study adopted a qualitative approach to gather data. One-on-one in-depth interviews were held with 22 PR practitioners from 15 organisations in the financial

services sector. The study used a semi-structured interview guide to solicit responses from practitioners. To ensure that the interview captured everything that was said, the researcher recorded the interviews after seeking permission from the participants. The data was analysed with the assistance of the qualitative data software Atlas.ti (version 7). The use of the software aided in the effective transcription and identification of themes that may have emerged during the interviews.

The current chapter will present and interpret the results from the interviews. The discussion will be done in line with how the interview guide was structured. It will therefore begin by discussing the general questions, which consist of demographic characteristics of the participants, including their views of PR. It will be followed by a discussion on the models of PR (purpose of PR) and the roles of PR (activities). The analysis will end with a look at participants' views on the PR industry in Ghana and some of the factors that influence PR practice in the country. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the analysis.

5.2. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.

This section will briefly discuss the characteristics of the participants. It will look at their designations, age, length of practice in the field of communication/PR, education, and whether they had any formal education in PR. It will conclude with a discussion on participants' views of the purpose of PR.

A total of 22 PR managers were recruited for this study. It must be noted that the titles differed depending on the organisation (See table below). They consisted of 15 managers and seven (7) deputy communication managers. The participants consisted of 15 males and seven females. Concerning the age of participants, six participants indicated that they were in their 50s while the rest were in their 30s and 40s.

A significant finding with regards to designations was that in many situations the marketing and communication (some had corporate affairs) practitioners were together as one department and headed by someone with a marketing background. In some cases, marketing had a stronger influence than PR as PR appeared to be subsumed under marketing. In one organisation, the corporate affairs department had three sections, namely PR, human resources, and legal. The overall head of the department was the head of legal. Another participant was also head of the business development, sales and communication department, where communication was

subsumed under business development. One of the key principles of the Excellence Theory is that for PR to become truly excellent in its role, it must be headed by someone with a background in PR as well as the necessary experience. The staff of the department must also have a background in PR. This can be achieved with a university education, continuing education or self-study. The background of the participants shows that in most situations this is not the case. Below are the designations of the participants as reflected in their departments:

Table 5.1: Demographics of participants

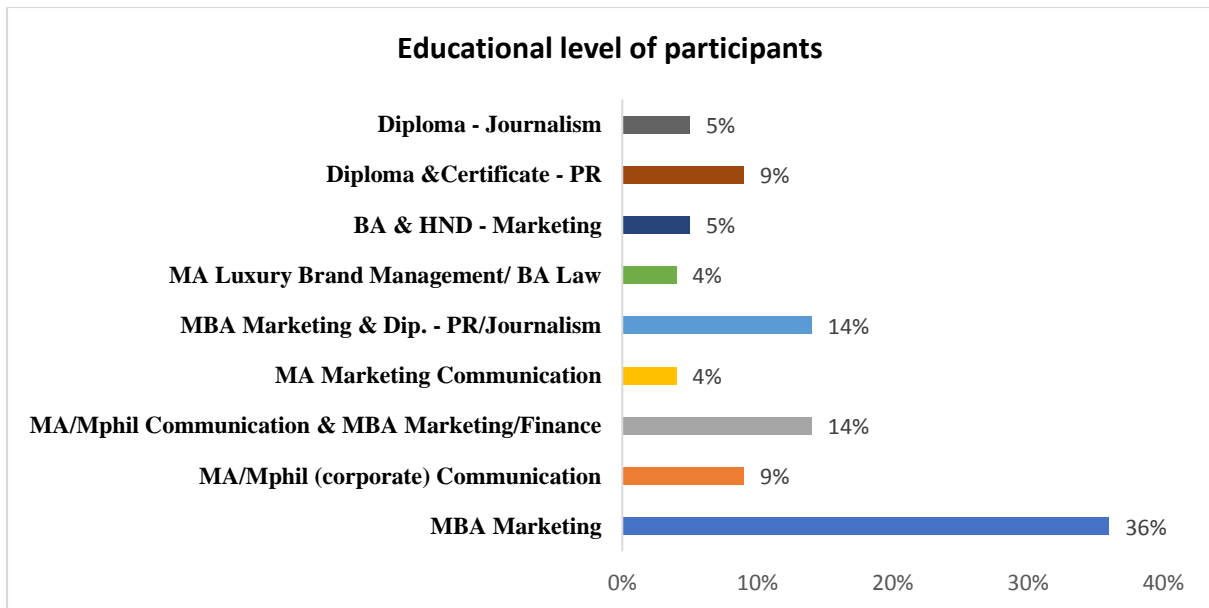
Designation	Education	Formal education in PR	³Certificate in PR
Corporate Communication & Brand Management	MBA Marketing Communication	None	No
Corporate Affairs Manager	MBA Marketing	None	No
Corporate Affairs Manager in charge of PR	Diploma in PR, certificate courses in PR from IPR, Ghana	Yes	N/A
Marketing	MBA Marketing	None	No
Communication & Brand Management	MBA Marketing	None	No
Marketing Communication	MPhil Communication, MBA in Marketing	Yes	N/A
Corporate & Investor Relations	MA Communication, MBA in Finance	Yes	N/A
Marketing & Communication	MA Luxury Brand management; BA Law	None	No
Marketing & Communication	Diploma in Journalism	Yes	Yes
Senior Corporate Communication Officer	MA, Communication, MBA in Marketing	Yes	N/A
Marketing & Communication	HND, BA Marketing	None	No

³ This was to determine whether those who did not have any formal educational background in PR had taken a certificate course in the subject to upgrade their knowledge of PR. It did not apply to those with a PR background

Marketing, Sales and Corporate Affairs	MBA Marketing, Dip. PR	Yes	N/A
Marketing & Communication	MBA Marketing	None	No
Business Development, Sales & Communication	MBA Marketing	None	No
Marketing Communication	MA Corporate Communication & Public Affairs	Yes	N/A
Corporate and Brand Communication	MBA Marketing, Diploma in Public Relations and Journalism	Yes	N/A
Marketing & Corporate Affairs	MBA Marketing	None	Yes
Marketing	MBA marketing	None	No
Marketing & Corporate Affairs	MBA Marketing		Yes
Public Relations Officer	MA, Communication, MA Governance, BA- PR	Yes	N/A
Public Relations Officer	MA Communication Studies	Yes	N/A
Marketing & Corporate Affairs	MA Marketing, Dip. in PR and Advertising	Yes	N/A

Source: Self-compilation

The chart below gives further information (in percentages) of the highest level of education as well as specific areas of specialisation. The skewness towards employing people with marketing background at the financial services sector to work as communication managers is quite profound.



Source: Field data (Researcher's compilation)

5.3. FINDINGS OF ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

The following section will discuss in detail the findings of the interviews held with the participants. The findings will be outlined according to how the interview guide was structured, namely conceptualisation of PR, PR models, PR roles and concluding questions. The various subcategories of the PR models and roles will also be clearly delineated and discussed.

5.3.1. Research objective: *Determine how PR is conceptualised by practitioners in the financial services sector in Ghana.*

Before gauging the views of participants regarding the models and roles of PR, the researcher deemed it necessary to gain insight into participants' views on the purpose of PR, that is, what PR meant to PR practitioners in the financial services sector. Literature reviewed earlier gave several definitions of PR. Literature shows that there is a lack of agreement on what constitutes PR. Some of the key definitions include: reputation management (Franklin et al 2009: 175), mutually beneficial relationship management (Butterick, 2011: 1; Heath & Coombs, 2006: 5), an applied social science that influences behaviour and policy (Burson, 2011), leadership and management (Lattimore et al 2004: 4), and development and management of ethical strategies to build relationships (Johnston et al 2009: 7). What is clear though, and is generally

agreed upon, is that PR is about building mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and its publics. Heath and Coombs (2006: 5) note that “relationships are strongest when they are mutually beneficial and characterised by ‘win-win’ outcomes.” In line with these definitions, the research participants were asked the question: “*What, in your view, is the main purpose of public relations.*” Participants gave various interrelated indicators of what they believed the main purpose of PR to be. PR was associated with information dissemination and publicity, relationship and reputational management/building, and credibility. Some of the definitions also related to the concept of marketing or what has been referred to as marketing PR. These definitions will be discussed briefly.

PR as information dissemination/publicity: Many of the participants were of the view that PR is about disseminating positive and newsworthy information about the organisation and its products and services. This is echoed in the statements of some of the participants.

“I believe PR is to disseminate information in a way and manner that makes it easily understandable by the target audience. The essence of PR is to really communicate the fact about your activities from an organisation in a way and manner in which stakeholders can understand and can also see themselves as part of that game,” said one participant.

Another participant said: “PR is to ensure that all the stakeholders of the institution are well informed and that includes our regulators, our customers, our shareholders, general public etc....”

Further comment stated:

For me PR is a way to put your best foot forward in terms of communicating who you are as a brand or institution to the public. I think with any sort of human relationship there are ways in which things can be misinterpreted and there are obviously avenues for miscommunication, so PR helps to streamline and demystify or helps to clarify the communication channels so that areas of miscommunication are minimised, so that the truth comes out. It is also a way to maximise and highlight on potential strengths and minimise the effect of potential weaknesses.”

Another participant said: “PR is supposed to be the channel through which information gets out of the organisation,” and further opinion was: “I am looking at it from various points. So, we look at what management wants to say in terms of our products to the stakeholders, mostly to customers, what management wants to say to the staff, that is, internal communication, and what the bank wants to say to the general public.”

This view of PR is supported by other participants who view the main role of PR as publicity. One participant, for instance, believes that the key role of PR is to “tell the good story of an organisation in order to create a good image for the organisation so that prospective customers and stakeholders can align their interest to the organisation.” Another participant also identified PR as “doing something good and getting credit for it.” The conceptualisation of PR as information dissemination is in sync with the earlier conceptualisation of PR practice as posited by Grunig and Hunt (1984). Grunig and Hunt (1984) categorised earlier practice of PR as based on one-way information dissemination (press agency/publicity and public information). Wilcox et al (2015: 42) note that publicity is a key aspect of PR as it allows practitioners to disseminate information that furthers the interest of the organisation. What is of interest, as seen from the research, is that the information disseminated is accurate and relevant. According to Heath and Coombs (2006: 5), accurate and relevant information leads to higher forms of relationship.

PR as relationship and reputational management: Most of the literature reviewed posited that PR is about relationship and reputational management. The definition of the Institute of Public Relations, UK, for instance, puts emphasis on reputation while other scholars and institutions describe it as based on mutually beneficial relationship (Wilcox et al 2015; Broom & Sha, 2012; PRSA, 2012; Heath & Coomb, 2006). These definitions of PR support the views of participants regarding the main purpose of PR. Participants described the main purpose of PR as dealing with relationship and reputational management. One participant described PR as “building and maintaining the image of one’s organisation.” Others referred to the fact that the purpose of PR is to enhance the corporate image of an organisation’s internal and external stakeholders. One participant, who suggested that PR is about positioning an organisation in a favourable role in order for the organisation to be accepted by its numerous stakeholders, gave an interesting example to buttress her view on PR:

I remember when I was coming to the bank from journalism my daughter, who was then very young, said mummy why this bank? I said do you have an account there? She said no but why this particular bank? So, I said that is the reason I am going there, to change the perception that people have of the bank. At that age, she had a certain perception of the bank. Currently that perception is still there and if we don't get it right it will impact business.

Another participant said: "The main focus of PR is to enhance the image of an organisation. Without a good corporate image, you can produce the best of products and services, but it will not be patronised. So, PR is an important essential for society."

The above comments seek to identify PR as being about managing reputation. This definition has been criticised by Heath and Coombs (2006: 7) as being "myopic" as it gives the impression that PR exists to clean up the mess created by bad business practices. Although they acknowledge the fact that every organisation wants to have a good reputation, they contend that good reputation is part of the success of an organisation. Their reason for rejecting this view is that focusing on PR solely on a reputational management basis leads to the belief that PR is about the distortion of truth to make bad organisations look good. This rejection however appears to be isolated as many PR scholars still establish PR as based on reputation management, as seen in the literature. One participant focused more on the relationship aspect of PR:

At the heart of PR is ensuring quality relations between the most important publics to that organisation and turning that relationship into a mutual value creation pipeline and making sure that relationship is beneficial beyond the immediate orbit of the parties to the extent that the larger environment is better off on the back of that relationship.

He explained this further by stating that

critical to what we do is ensuring that we have a clear view of all our important publics and stakeholders. We are properly calibrated and in tune with them. We walk and work in tandem and ensure that there is value creation at every opportunity and consistently and in a manner which is sustainable.

This aligns with some of the definitions of PR which puts emphasis on relationship management as a catalyst for positive organisational reputation.

Creating a positive image: Participants also associated the purpose of PR with creating a positive image for the organisation through publicity services. This is not surprising since PR has sometimes been associated with attempts to gain positive publicity or image for an organisation. One participant was of the view that when it comes to PR “you want to get someone to speak for you instead of doing a bid for advertisement, so even if it is your work you don’t want directly to tout what you are doing but you want someone to speak for you in order to create a positive image for you in the minds of your publics.” According to a participant from a bank, PR is meant to “create a positive image and get the public to see you in a positive light so that the brand can be attractive to the publics.” This is emphasised by another participant who states that PR is “basically to project a positive image about the brand and create a certain goodwill for the brand. It is also about connecting emotionally with your publics especially through social media.” The purpose of PR is also linked with how the corporate culture of the organisation portrays the organisation, as seen in the statement of one participant:

PR, I believe, is key to helping sustain the image of a company. So, every company needs a PR department to help shape the image of the company and this comes in different aspects. For example, how you present yourself on your website, how your logos are, how you manage your internal communications that reflects the relationship between your publics, how people view you when they hear your brand name.

Marketing public relations: One of the key realisations from the interviews is how PR appeared to have a marketing focus. This was evident from some of the interviews but nevertheless unsurprising considering the fact that in most of these institutions, marketing and communication are linked and mostly headed by someone with a purely marketing background. Literature shows that marketing is often confused with PR. Marketing practitioners and academics tend to describe PR as one of the four Ps - product, place, price and promotion - although Kotler (cited in Wilcox et al 2015: 48) describes it as the fifth “P”. The term marketing PR has therefore been used by many to refer to the use of PR to promote an organisation’s products and services (Theaker,

2012: 12). Theaker suggests that this association is not entirely wrong as PR can play an essential role in promoting goods and services. This assertion is corroborated by Hallahan (2013: 457) who suggests that marketers have long viewed publicity and marketing PR as part of their responsibilities. This market orientation is reflected in the statement of one participant who is the marketing communication manager of one of the banks:

I use PR for engaging selected or targeted markets, so that's the purpose of PR. PR for me is another part of the tools available to us. We adopt different PR approaches towards making a stronger statement to go further into areas that we feel our advertising campaigns or promotions cannot reach. We want to believe PR has quite some level of credibility all the other channels may not necessarily have. Assessment is therefore based on who the target market is at the end of the day. If I want to reach a particular market after the various engagement, there is the need to do the necessary follow ups to find out if that message has gone down well and the kind of perception that we want to build with our PR strategy has been achieved.

Another participant referred to PR as simply a tool to inform a targeted market on the services and products of an organisation. The focus on marketing practices is clearly seen in the words that some of the participants used, including target market, consumers, advertising tools, etc. Some of the participants were of the view that there is not much difference between marketing and communication because of the relationship between them. The purpose of marketing PR is to affect the bottom line and in the financial services sector this is clearly the case. In some cases, PR was seen to be subsumed under marketing even though the two are supposed to be separated, as the Excellence theory suggests. Wilcox et al (2015: 46) clearly distinguish the purpose of marketing from PR. Despite their common objectives, the two disciplines approach their tasks from different perspectives. PR however does support marketing in diverse ways. In the area of publicity for instance, PR ensures that marketing activities gain media coverage. This is normally referred to as marketing communication. The confusion between the two disciplines stems from their definition in different texts. In PR texts marketing is referred to as dealing with sales and sales-related functions while marketing texts describe PR in terms of publicity (Theaker,

2012: 13). The choice of people with marketing backgrounds serving as PR practitioners can be largely attributed to the understanding that management of these organisations have about PR.

5.3.2 Research objective: *To analyse the views of Ghanaian PR practitioners in the financial services sector about the selected PR models.*

This section will discuss the application of the models of PR in the financial services sector. The research examined how practitioners use each of the models as prescribed by scholars such as James Grunig. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002: 306) posit that for PR to be excellent, it must be strategic and symmetrical. The study therefore sought to determine the models that practitioners use and how these models influence the practice. The analysis will be subcategorised according to the four models.

5.3.2.1. Press agency/publicity

Purpose of the PR department: The PR department performs many functions and key among them is building and maintaining a positive relationship between an organisation and its key publics using effective communication. The practitioner is therefore able to protect the reputation of the organisation, increase prestige, and present a positive corporate image which ultimately affects the organisation's bottom-line. PR departments also create goodwill for the organisation through their activities including community relations/corporate social responsibility, media relations, investor relations, employee relations, etc. Based on this, participants were asked to indicate the purpose of their department.

Participants were generally in agreement that their main duty was to gain a positive image for their organisation. This has become even more necessary at a time when the financial sector is undergoing a credibility crisis due to the collapse of some financial institutions in recent years, including two reputable banks in 2017. In the words of one participant:

Yes, we have tried to create a certain image for the company, we have tried to position the company properly and we have tried to maintain that position for the company. And in everything that we have done we have

tried to make sure that we position the company well. So, whatever it is that we'll do to maintain the image of the company, that is what we've done in terms of our publicity and CSR.

Another participant also noted that the activities of her department were meant to position the organisation in a favourable role to be accepted by the organisation's stakeholders. This, she believed, would encourage the stakeholders to continue doing business with them. For some participants, the activities they engage in are meant to create a positive image for the organisation.

In terms of activities the role is threefold; I work on the corporate marketing strategy, the communication strategy, including protocol services, and on media relations for the bank. We mostly look at projects, especially events. We initiate the PR programme for all events from the beginning to the end. This includes media relations, press soirees for senior journalists and position papers for speeches.

This was emphasised by the director of marketing communication in another organisation:

For us it's multi-layered and there is a diverse set of responsibility that we have as a marketing communication department. PR is one subset, but we are involved with brand management, communicating to the public what the organisation's brand stands for, what are our DNA codes and also communicating internally to make sure everyone is aligned to the brand and also managing our reputation in the public sphere, making sure that we partner with projects that should be associated with what the organisation stands for. We also work on projects that are consistent with our brand values.

One participant from an insurance company noted that they engage in both marketing and PR activities mainly due to the absence of a core marketing department. He therefore combines the PR and marketing activities to enhance the visibility of the organisation thereby getting stakeholders to do business with them. A key aspect of the PR function is information dissemination or publicity. Some of the participants emphasised this by acknowledging that dissemination of information through various channels is a core part of what they do as a department. One participant said: "We

look at what management wants to say in terms of our products to the stakeholders, mostly to customers. What management wants to say to the staff, that is, internal communication, and what the bank wants to say to the public.” Another participant stated:

Generally, we are involved in external communication. We practice what is called marketing communication, not a whole lot of PR. Recently we've had to do a little bit more of PR because we found ourselves pushed when we first morphed into a group. We needed to communicate to the public, so we engaged an external communication company to guide us through the process.

Information dissemination to gain positive publicity is one of the hallmarks of PR, whether one-way or two-way. Through the dissemination of newsworthy information practitioners are able to influence public perception of their organisation. It is about “Telling our story” (Broom & Sha, 2012: 7). Interestingly, only one participant from the insurance industry focused on lobbying as a key part of what the department does. Whenever the organisation has an issue, especially with a regulator, the department uses its position as a member of a key association to lobby for policies to be looked at in a way that will favour the industry. Lobbying attempts to influence public policy in favour of the organisation/industry. PR strategists sometimes use lobbying, directly or indirectly, to achieve certain goals (Hansen-Horn, 2013: 521). The lack of lobbying among participants is likely because they may not have the required skills as this is a specialised area of PR.

Another participant from a bank indicated investor relations was a key part of the department's activities. This was however not the case in most of the organisations interviewed. The use of press releases and getting publicity appears to dominate PR activities in the financial services sector in Ghana. What is also evident is that the merging of the marketing and communication department makes distinguishing between the PR functions and the marketing functions a bit problematic. The status of PR and marketing is one of the most debated issues in the history of PR. There appears to be little consensus as to whether they should be separate or merged with one, particularly marketing, overseeing the other. Whereas PR practitioners see PR as a way of managing an organisation's total communication, marketers often

associate PR with publicity, i.e. garnering favourable media coverage for the organisation's products and services (Gregory, 2016). The situation has not been helped by the sometimes narrow view of an organisation's management regarding the purpose of PR. This can explain why most financial institutions merge the two functions with a marketing specialist as the head. The Excellence theory, however, advocates for a complete segregation of the two functions. The theory posits that PR should not be made a supporting tool for other departments, especially marketing. When this happens, PR cannot be managed strategically (Grunig & Grunig, 2008: 337).

Although most participants, especially those with a purely marketing background, attempted to make the distinction between the two roles, it was obvious by their responses regarding the purpose of the PR department that there is a strong leaning towards marketing. One participant, for instance, when asked about the purpose of the PR department said: "Basically there are two things; the first one is to ensure that all the stakeholders of the institution are well informed and that includes our regulators, our customers, our shareholders, general public etc. Secondly, to use the information generated from our activities, products and new developments of the bank to also impact on the bank's bottom-line."

Another also said that: "the corporate affairs department is responsible for designing and placing adverts for the organisation on the production services." A more succinct statement from yet another participant, "we do sales activation from a marketing point, direct marketing, advertising, and some form of PR through media relations activities," shows how the merging of the two functions can lead to a higher focus on marketing to the detriment of PR. This is not surprising as literature highlights the blurring lines between PR and other disciplines, especially marketing. The integration of marketing and communication is seen as necessary to better enhance consumer satisfaction (Scriven, 2002: 30). Overall, the statements on the purpose of PR link with what literature says. Coombs and Heath (2006: 8) attempt to capture the complexity of PR in a single, albeit long, definition. Their definition shows the purpose of PR as consisting of five key characteristics, namely: serving as a management function, consisting of the five major functions of PR (planning, research, publicity, promotion, and collaborative decision-making), emphasising the need for the practitioners to

listen, appreciate, and respond to the publics, ensuring mutually beneficial relationship, and achieving a particular mission and vision.

Measurement of PR programmes: The use of measurement has been debated for several years. In a competitive business environment which is constantly becoming complex due to globalisation, practitioners are constantly under pressure to show value for their work. Simply put, the need to show how PR contributes to the bottom-line is increasing daily. There is a strong demand for scientific measurement to show return on investment (Jugenheimer, Kelley, Hudson & Bradley, 2014; Stack, 2011; Michaelson & Stacks, 2011; Macnamara, 2008; Watson & Noble, 2007; Grunig, 1992). Argument has also been made on the type of tools used to measure PR programmes. Grunig (2006), for instance, notes that practitioners usually focus on the short-term effects when measuring PR programmes. Macnamara (2006) also questions the actual utilisation of research and evaluation despite the improvement in the quality. The discussion on measurement and evaluation culminated in the drafting of what became known as the Barcelona Principles in 2010. The principles sought to standardise measurement and evaluation using scientific methods (Schriner, Swenson & Gilkerson, 2017: 2). In 2015, the principles were revised to reflect “holistic” communication across owned, paid, earned, and shared media channels. Literature however shows that PR measurement mostly focuses on outputs more than outcomes.

Results show that communication practitioners in the financial services sector use a variety of tools to measure their PR programmes. This consists of both formal and informal methods. Results however show that most participants use more informal methods than formal. Media clippings appear to dominate the measurement procedures of participants. For some participants, “the level of interest should give you an idea about how your programme is going. The amount of initial write ups, the amount of debates your activities generate, the amount of coverage you get out there as well and the follow-ups that go through.” In the words of another participant: “we use both traditional and social media for measurement. We use Google analytics, but we also contract external agencies to do the measurement and monitoring for us so that it will not be just what we are doing. We want to be sincere to ourselves, so we look at the external one.” The dominance of media clippings is in line with what exists in literature (Starčić & Jakopović, 2016; Pooi Yin, Krishnan & Ean, 2012; Kwansah-

Aidoo, 2008; Watson, 2004). Grunig (2008: 9) also highlighted the use of media monitoring to show the value of PR programmes. Another participant acknowledged the mostly informal nature of measurement efforts regarding PR activities:

We do a lot of the informal, which is almost on a daily basis, but with the formal sometimes yearly and depending, sometimes every two years etc. So, our communication activities are mostly based on informal research, but we do formal ones from time to time.

Methods used in the measurement process differed among some participants. Methods ranged from feedback through phone calls, mystery shopping, interactions among staff, media monitoring, comments from management or board, enquiries, and sometimes actual surveys or interviews. The use of surveys and interviews are not regular and are done either once in a year or two. A participant said:

Success for a typical event is the number of people who come, and we also gauge how the event was carried out in the media and any feedback at all from the attendees. For example, if we do a branch opening what we do first and foremost is to monitor the stories that come up in the various media houses and know whether a lot of the media houses carried the story on that particular event. We also speak to some of our staff who are normally at that event to find out their general perception about the event and what we did wrong and what we could have done better.

This statement was echoed by many more participants as reflected in the following statements:

If we do a programme, we do newspaper clippings to find out how far the story has gone. We look at the publicity aspect. We also look at the feedback that we receive from the public or the response that we receive in terms of our businesses. Whatever it is that is coming. We are also able to measure our success through word of mouth, that is, what people say. Sometimes when you have a referral, people referring you to clients, then you know you have done the right thing. Even in our CSR activities we have tried to find out how far we have reached, what the effect has been by interacting with beneficiaries. We have gone that far to interact

with actual beneficiaries even though they are directed at educational institutions and help institutions.

Depending on programmes, for instance, if it is about press release it has to do with the number of press clippings and newspapers. The critical one however is the sales. With marketing and PR there is not much difference because there is a relationship between them. We also use social media to track how many times people have shared, liked or commented on a product. Sometimes we also look at the feedback we get from a client. We have a telephone number that we use. Sometimes, annually we use a client satisfaction survey. For launching of events, sometimes it is a bit difficult but it all has to do with the traffic you get. For instance, we have a hot line number so if you do an event people start calling and making enquiries based on that event.

The event will be successful but when we engage people they appreciate the bank not necessarily through the banking service we offer but through CSR. That is very fulfilling. I wouldn't say the methods we use are scientific. It is mainly informal using one-on-one/face-to-face interaction and the feedback we get. In terms of publicity, we have engaged an agency to do media monitoring for us so it is not inhouse.

And

The first thing we do is look at social media. It is very easy to track how people have actually reacted to your organisation whether they liked it, whether they commented and if they commented you can track to see if the comments are positive or not. With the print media we use media monitoring and content analysis to determine what has been written. We use media clippings also. In terms of social media this is an additional medium. There are also the web portals.

The seemingly unscientific nature of measurement is further corroborated by a participant who acknowledged the challenges of PR measurement, especially within the African environment:

Measuring PR activities in our part of the world has been a real challenge. Though there are scientific ways of doing this, they don't support that, and senior management also tend not to believe in these tools, so I would say after every event we do some form of measurement but it's not scientific. For instance, I am putting together the team for this year's AGM. I will engage my team to walk through the full programme and say at this point of the programme last year we had challenges what can we do to fix the challenges, so they don't re-occur? How did we fare last year in terms of the media we invited, were they the right people? After the event did we get enough publicity, was ABC done. So, we look at all these not like scientifically have a document guiding us but general review meetings that is able to tell. Apart from that we also get feedback from stakeholders and senior teams and other colleagues which gives us a fair idea of how we fared. Sometimes our shareholders will call and give us feedback on some programme or annual report we did. The board chairman will call us and make a comment like 'oh this year the publicity was good.

The participant cited an example to further buttress his case:

Recently one of our key clients within the footballing fraternity was involved in an accident and we decided to present a cheque to them during a sporting event so that the sports community will also know we provide insurance for the footballing community. The next day my board chairman called to say, 'but how come you are not in the media and our competitor is already there?' And I'm like 'no chair, I have a programme.' He didn't agree but felt we should have been there first. So, all of this is feedback. That very day I had sent out my stories to the various media. The following day I was in three papers as well as a number of online media. Then he called back and said, 'but if you had done all of this why didn't you tell me?' and I'm like 'I had a programme in place.' So you get all this feedback from different levels just to give you a fair idea of what people are expecting and what you have also done. I got calls from Kumasi from some FM stations who said 'oh we saw this in the papers yesterday and we want you to speak to it. So scientifically we don't have

a programme in place to measure but from the traditional sources you are able to tell the effect of the impact of whatever you are able to do.

A few of the participants tend to use a mixture of formal and informal measurement systems to determine the success of their programmes. According to one participant, measurement of PR efforts goes beyond just looking at the amount of publicity the programme generated. The main purpose is to look at the effect or outcome:

We have many different levels and types of metrics, but ultimately it is about the outcomes and not the outputs, so we do not typically measure output. For example, I wouldn't stop at the level of coverage I got. I am interested in the nature of the coverage and the impact the coverage had. So, we tend to be end-result oriented and that translates into the metrics and the measurement we put in place which will be defined before execution and as part of the planning process. So, if you are doing something that involves stakeholders then invariably we are likely to agree on what the metrics and measures are going to be with all the stakeholders whether there is understanding and a sign off and then post execution we just go back and see how we performed against all those measures. There are several methods we use. If it is a service or a product I am very much interested in, the way we communicate is a way which is easily consumed by key publics. So, in this instance feedback is an important determinant. I am also interested in measuring exposure and reaction to the exposure and I also measure how that translates into any kind of value that we want out of that exposure. So, media monitoring is part of it.

Preparation is therefore essential before any PR programme is undertaken. Proactive measurement processes ensure that a practitioner has a fair idea as to how to measure outcomes effectively and how to link programme objectives to achievement/success. Another participant who also uses both formal and informal said informal measurement was mainly in the form of 'unsolicited' feedback:

In Ghana people are very interested in what you do and tend to give unsolicited feedback so most of the time you have people call you and

say we've seen this thing and it's good or we think you could have done it this way. So that's one way of doing it. We also have the formal one where from time to time we conduct customer feedback surveys to find out about some of the activities we've done and also what we're doing as an organisation. We also do media monitoring on a daily basis. We have termed it market intelligence so every day we look at what is happening in the market, us, our competitors, and we see how we can either counteract or see what we can do in that regard. We use traditional as well as online media to find out what is happening within the industry.

One participant also commented on the use of perception audit management as part of their measurement and evaluation of PR activities:

We do perception audit management. We do surveys sometimes to ascertain what people think. We also use Meltwater, who also do online monitoring and advise us. We also do an internal analysis to measure feedback. Sometimes we use interviews and social media to gather feedback. We also do what we call media intelligence/clippings as well as competitor analysis. What is working and what is not working, what are customers are saying. Are there things we can look at and shape them?

A participant was of the view that his department uses a variety of approaches, including internal and external feedback mechanisms:

We conduct external research occasionally using outside agencies, but we also employ some internal strategies. For example, here, the board is very particular about how strategies we propose are actually given value. At every board meeting you are supposed to justify what you've done through a research report. We engage the services of research agencies, some we do internally. We do what we call benchmarking. So, I will deploy my team through either mystery shopping or comparative assessment of our strategies and then we also go to our customers to assess the effect or impact. When it has to do with knowledge or awareness, what we do is more of a survey, so we just do a sample of

awareness of product. Last year for instance we realised that in terms of visibility we were very low because we were not doing enough publicity. However, if you compare the visibility and then the product success you realise the product, especially our public service products/pack, was very successful among the public sector workers and yet we were not doing a lot of media noise about it, and if you benchmark that against our competitors we were high when it came to the public sector offering. We use more one-on-one or interpersonal communication than large scale publicity. So, we do research but use different approaches.

And

Concerning communication, we do a lot of media monitoring. The GAMs report for instance shows the media behaviour of the various organisations and the impact; to see who has more voice or has more attention. We use these reports to further do a research/ The reports gives you an inclination of what is happening and then you have to engage the agency if you want it to be more specific and tailored to your organisations. The agencies do more of the formal research. The agencies show us the number of times we have appeared on radio and so on. We use content analysis for most of these things.

According to Grunig et al (2002: 25-26), for PR to be described as excellent, it must be premised on measurement and evaluated using formal (scientific) and informal (unscientific) methods. This allows practitioners to show real value for their programmes. Macnamara (2008: 1) points to the use of formal and informal methods by management in both public and private organisations to evaluate important areas of organisational activities to ensure accountability, and suggested it was important for PR to follow suit.

Measurement is focused mostly on output more than outcomes for many of the participants, especially those who tend to gauge success of PR programmes by the amount of publicity received. Stack and Bowen (2013: 21) define outputs as “the final stage of a communication product, production or process resulting in the production and dissemination of a communication product.” This can be in the form of media release, website, events, a speech etc. Measurement, on the other hand, deals with

the “immediate result of a PR programme or activity,” that measures possible exposure to information dissemination by the public (Schriner et al 2017: 4). In the words of one participant: “The point is that when it comes to an event we look at the immediate impact and that is based on the level of publicity given to the event.” Another participant was of the view that “sometimes when you have a referral, people referring you to clients, then you know you have done the right thing.”

The activities of PR are expected to affect the bottom-line, and for the financial sector, this is critical. It means whatever is done must result in increase in sales and more customers. Practitioners should be able to demonstrate that their work is valuable. Stacks, Dodd and Men (2011) posit that practitioners must be able to show both nonfinancial (ROE) and financial (ROI) indicators through the use of research. Proving ROI is essential to give the profession more value in the eyes of management. ROI is reflected in some of the comments participants gave regarding measurement of PR programmes. The following statement from one participant echoes this thought:

The nature of the measurement depends on the programmes. For instance, if it is about a press release it has to do with the number of press clippings and newspapers. The critical one however is the sales. We also use social media to track how many times people have shared your product, liked or commented on a product. Sometimes we also look at the feedback we get from client. We have a telephone number that we use. Sometimes annually we use a client satisfaction survey. For launching of events, sometimes it's a bit difficult but it all has to do with the traffic you get. For instance, we have a hot-line number so if you do an event people start calling making enquiries based on that event.

Another participant also made the following comment:

when we do promos, we look at the traffic we generate. We look at the bottom-line in terms of sales. We look at the objectives and then the expected results. We look at the projections and if the projections have changed in terms of what we are looking at. It serves as a measuring standard for us.

Grunig et al (2002: 97) suggest that PR shows value when it “reconciles the organisation’s goal with the expectation of its strategic constituencies.” In this regard, the contributions of PR provide direct, financial value to the organisation. Development, nurturing and maintenance of relationship between an organisation and its key publics contributes to the financial growth of the organisation through increased market share, positive publicity, investor attraction, avoiding overregulation, increased premium prices, among others. In effect the impact of PR activities can be seen both in financial terms and credible relationships with key stakeholders (Grunig et al 2002: 101-102).

Interestingly, one of the participants believed that measuring the effect of PR on sales is quite difficult.

When we issue out releases and we have our clippings, we check which media house featured our story. When we get prime coverage then we know the coverage for that story is really high based on the platform that it came from. So, when we do our clippings we have an estimated number of people we know that have seen the story. For online we know the hits on the website. We calculate the number of people who have seen the story. For print we know the circulation. The challenge is that it is difficult to assess the impact even though you may have done the coverage; sometimes you speak to people and they don't know what you are talking about. So media coverage is not enough and we don't use that just as our assessment. We use that for our stakeholders to know that this is what we are doing. We need to disseminate more information about our activities, so we use the media a lot, but we use other supporting activities. We use PR as leverage to now drive home whatever we want to sell.

This is supported by another participant who asserted that:

we use press clippings to monitor our performance in the public. In terms of seeing how it translate in sales that is a bit more difficult, but we try and determine that in our application forms by putting a line in there that will ask ‘how did you get to know of us’ or when we have

activations and the sales come through we try to ask how they got to know.

These statements confirm the view that most practitioners struggle to employ the right measure to explain PR's value. Findings by Watson (2011) showed that the term ROI is used 'loosely' among UK PR practitioners and mostly interpreted in terms of AVE measurement. On the other hand, Watson and Zerfass (2011: 11) argue that due to the complex nature of the communication process and the role it plays in business interaction, calculating ROI in financial terms becomes 'impossible'. Grunig (2006) also acknowledges this when he says that the specific worth of PR activities in terms of value is difficult to monetise. From the discussion, it can be concluded that gauging return on investment is not a simple issue and clear measurement methods must be used by practitioners to show the true contribution of their activities to the bottom-line. Some authors (Watson & Likely, 2013; Macnamara, 2014) have pointed to alternative measurement processes such as the 'Benefit Cost Ratio', logic models, and 'communication performance management' as being available for practitioners to utilise.

In reviewing the responses for this question, it is obvious that informal methods dominate measurement of PR programmes. Methods such as amount of coverage received, feedback (mostly unsolicited), evaluation forms after programmes, views from colleagues, management, and customers are crucial in gauging how successful or otherwise a programme has been. The focus on sales and increased enquiries are also a key factor in determining success. Only a few actually use methods such as focus group, content analysis, or survey. Some participants also find the use of a dipstick survey quite useful in the measurement of programmes. At least three of the participants were of the view that dipstick research helps them to know the effect of their programmes.

The excellence study and other literature on PR research highlight the strong relationship between research, especially measurement and evaluation, and successful PR practices (Michaelson & Stacks, 2014: 10; Grunig & Gurnig, 2008: 335, 340). Measurement of PR programmes has been categorised at three levels. The first, which is the most basic level, is the compilation of media messages (also referred to as media clippings) and media placement. The second level, which uses

sophisticated techniques, measures message awareness, comprehension, and retention. The final level, the most advanced form, measures changes in attitude, opinions, and behaviour (Wilcox et al 2015: 226). Results show measurement from practitioners in the financial services sector is mostly at the basic level with very few engaging in the second and third levels. A global survey of communication measurement by Benchpoint, a measurement firm, for the Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) in 2009 aptly confirms the findings in this research. The survey, which was conducted among professionals mainly from Europe and America, showed that gathering media clippings was still the main tool used in determining the success of PR programmes. Practitioners measured success based on their ability to “hit” the target media (20%), followed by message output (16%), and measurement of awareness/image, client satisfaction, and achievement of goals (15% each). Heath and Coombs (2006:184) differentiate between what they call process (output) evaluation and outcome evaluation and argue that many practitioners often confuse process for outcome evaluation, a situation that has also been highlighted severally by the PRSA when reviewing entries for its annual Silver Anvil Awards. The result again highlights what has been acknowledged historically; that practitioners have and continue to rely on press clippings/media monitoring and content analysis as evidence of the success or failure of PR campaigns.

What is interesting though is that not many of the participants use digital analytics to measure PR programmes. In an era of digitisation, one would have thought that focus will very much be on the use of online measurement techniques. Wilcox et al (2015: 169) suggest that the use of the web and social media as a communication tool by PR practitioners is very critical to PR practice. The authors suggest that analysing what audiences are saying and thinking on networks such as Facebook, Twitter, posting write-ups on Facebook, and the “blogosphere”, among others, for online opinion writing can provide a solid foundation for planning and implementing PR programmes. With the digital explosion and the media landscape increasingly becoming digital, literature is constantly highlighting the use of digital analytics such as Google analytics, web analytics, and social media monitoring tools to measure and evaluate PR activities. This is however far from being the case. Many of the institutions, including the very old and well-known ones, do not even have a social

media account. Much as they acknowledged the importance of online measurement techniques, they are yet to use this, especially social media. Some of the practitioners nevertheless said they were making arrangements to go online as soon as possible while others had already begun the process. This result is in line with literature, which shows that although very few people have little knowledge about the use of digital analytics, especially Google analytics, the number of practitioners utilising it to help “shape, drive, measure, and evaluate” are very few (CIPR, 2015). This is attributed to the wrong assumption that such analytics are mainly for measuring web traffic.

Public relations success based on publicity: As found in literature, PR has moved from publicity to a more complex, scientific measurement. What literature has shown is that media impressions can no longer be used as a yardstick to measure the impact of any PR programme. As much as media impressions or amount of publicity received is good in creating awareness about an organisation and its product, it does not show how many people saw/read the story, absorbed it, or even took an action. The global survey report (Benchmark, 2009: 2) found that effective placement of messages in the media is mostly used as criteria to determine success rather than evaluating impact a message might have on shifting public opinion, awareness, or moving markets. The report however acknowledged that the trend is changing. The study sought to find out the views of participants on the use of publicity as a measurement of PR success.

Overall, participants acknowledged that the amount of publicity one generates is essential in measuring the effectiveness of a PR programme. They were however quick to add that publicity alone cannot be used to measure the success of a PR programme. Participants clearly distinguished between PR and publicity. Literature shows that publicity has often been confused with the wider concept of PR. PR is much more than publicity and this was not lost on almost all the participants. One participant puts it this way:

I will say that publicity is a quantity driven philosophy which has obvious demerits. It is always important to look at the impact you are getting as well as the nature of the impact. For example, if you took a typical Ghanaian media landscape and somebody did an event and it was in several media and if the key publics targeted, for example key decision-

makers and movers of industry who invariably will not be reading all those things, and may read only one newspaper or who may best be reached through an out of home medium and you did 50 newspapers, you would have really racked up numbers on the board. You would have gotten excellent publicity in terms of your connection with your core publics. However, someone who did just one channel will have a better impact.

This point was echoed by several of the participants. One participant noted that:

From my experience I won't say publicity alone amounts to success because if it is just publicity there is enough out there to change perceptions, but it doesn't. This is because it's in relation to a service we provide as an institution so if you are always out there and people come, and it doesn't reflect on the quality of service you provide it negates whatever you put outside. PR can therefore not be the same as publicity. Publicity is being visible but then if you want to establish the relationship bit it is still so different from publicity. It is just an aspect but very different from PR.

A participant from another institution noted that equating the amount of publicity received to success is a "narrow way of looking at the success of a PR campaign.."

To this participant:

publicity is one thing, but you have to look beyond that. For me it is the quality of how one's perception of a brand has changed, with the public's interaction with various brands and personalities. It is that relationship with them, how they have changed their opinion of you. That is the first step. If it is now changed from negative to positive, then you now are closer to increasing your net promoter. It could be that you have a potential brand ambassador who may not be actually patronising your products and services, but they now have a positive view of this particular brand and that is the beginning of this relationship. We now know that person can be courted; that person can be converted to a true believer of the brand, so it is also changing public perception as well.

The point about publicity was further emphasised by three other participants who gave examples of some publicity services and effect on their institutions:

There can be noise and it is not just because people are mentioning you. You can have the highest share of voice because you have so much money, but the effectiveness is not measured by the number of mentions you have. Because as we speak we are currently running a certain campaign and we can tell that the campaign is faulty, but we are all over the place. So, I don't think it is wholly true, because if they are mentioning it for the wrong reasons they are mentioning it but it won't help. Our name is in the media all the time due to the campaign we are doing, we are still trying to pull it out of the public domain, but it is not having the needed effect. We think the campaign is not good for the image of the bank. Image is everything and so if they are mentioning you for the wrong reasons for so many times I don't think it is right.

I have come to realise that the noise level that one creates for any product or service is actually determined by the knowledge of the prospective customers/clients and sometimes you will not get the desired result. So, you hear everything on radio, buying spot ads, getting yourself in the newspapers. It is good but effective PR will make you identify the real needs and how to target your strategies. In our organisation for instance we do not make a lot of noise in terms of publicity compared to my previous institution. You may get the noise level but may not have gotten effective selling because simply hearing yourself on radio or TV does not compel someone to come to you. So, I would rather target the market that my strategies are meant to address or focus on. Although there is a certain truth in terms of visibility, but I doubt if many practitioners even go back to check if the publicity translates to the returns. Many don't spend time on research. Popularity of a product does not mean knowledge is acquired.

And

I don't totally subscribe to that position. My orientation is that PR must make an impact and must influence. What good is all the publicity when the end product of the event or activity is zero. So, publicity is necessary just to let people know what you are doing but I think the most important thing is the impact. Of course, there are some activities that are geared towards just creating publicity. You just want people to know what you are doing. For instance, a few days ago a journalist came to tell me that he was doing a story on insurance claims and wanted to interview me and I'm like this is an opportunity for me to let the public know the claims we have paid so far. I want to put this story out there not because I want to generate enough publicity but ultimately for people to know that in this organisation, we are in the business of paying claims; especially as people hold a negative view that insurance companies don't like paying claims. So yes, publicity is necessary but it must be supported by the impact from whatever event or story is being put out there. You can have all the publicity but if the impact and influence is negative or zero it is bad Cedi spent

These comments reflect the fact that publicity in itself does not guarantee success. "publicity is publicity but a lot more is dependent on quality in terms of what perception the people have after the campaign more than whether they heard, or they didn't hear," as a participant pointed out. For participants, most of what they do is in the background, but publicity is used just to achieve the end. One participant stated: "Publicity can therefore not be used excessively. Sometimes you use relationship building. How do you foster relationship and enhance the image of your stakeholders, even the conduct of your internal stakeholders and so on." Others further articulated that "you may have coverage in all the wrong places; you may have coverage in newspapers nobody is reading. You may have presence on radio stations nobody is listening to or a TV station nobody is watching. So, if it's just about numbers, I think that is a problem. I will rather look at the quality, where it is getting to, who has seen it or who has heard it. That is key for me as against just a number. The number is not primarily what I look out for." For participants, it is about content. Participants believe

one cannot 'make noise' where there is no content. It is ultimately about what the publics are given and the image an organisation projects. This confirms the findings in the global communication survey (as stated earlier) that the trend towards using publicity as a measure of success is changing.

Three participants however had a slightly contrary view on this issue. One of them said that "assuming that you have invited about 20 media houses to cover an assignment and only 5 turned up. That means it will not get enough publicity and people will not get to know because the wider the coverage the better," while the other also articulated that "in this era, information visibility is essential. The more you make noise the better for you. Some might not necessarily want to do anything but the more you hit them with your information and what you are about, unconsciously it imbibes into their mindset and even that alone can give you some leverage. So, it is very important, and we have to do more." The third participant also suggested that:

Publicity is key. What I know is that in PR you have to shout louder. It is said that in PR the media helps to tell your story, in advertising you blow your trumpet. So, if the media helps to tell your story then you need to engage in publicity more. But in publicity too we are looking at the tools/channels we use in engaging our publics. So I believe publicity is key because if you are driving home a product or service, if you are bringing something new people need to know, if you don't make noise how will people get to know. If you don't come out strongly people will not know.

As much as they acknowledged that publicity cannot always improve the bottom-line, they did assert that the more one engages in publicity, the more likely an organisation can influence public perception. Although most of the participants disagreed that publicity alone could be used as a measure of success, results on programme measurement show that publicity, as literature also confirms, dominates measurement of PR programmes. Botta (2007: 154) asserts that publicity cannot be used to show there is awareness, the message has been accepted, and audiences have reacted to the information.

5.3.2.2. Public Information

This section of the interview sought to determine how participants use media clippings in the measurement of their PR programmes, their views on the dissemination of positive and negative information, and the role of PR practitioners as mediators, among others.

Role of media clippings in PR measurement: Collection of media clippings is one of the many metrics used in the measurement of PR programmes. The number of times a PR programme is reported or the number of media that carry a story gives an impression of the likely success of that programme. Literature shows that media clippings are commonly used by practitioners to measure PR activities (Starcic & Jakopovic, 2016; Wright, Leggetter & Zerfass, 2009; Watson, 2004). A review of measurement studies by Wright and Hanson (2012) between 2006 and 2012 revealed that more than half (54%) of practitioners use media clippings in measuring programme success. However, as Botta (2007: 154) points out, press clippings cannot be the yardstick to determine programme success. PR practitioners need to prove the worth of PR by finding new ways of measuring programmes rather than using press clippings (Watson, 2014: 16).

Result of the interviews show media clippings dominate PR measurement tools in the financial services sector, although whether it does translate into actual outcomes is a matter of debate. Participants acknowledged the critical role that media clippings play in the measurement of PR programmes in their organisations. For most, management expect to see the 'good' things the organisation is doing in the media at all times and so the clippings help them to measure how far their activities are being reported, who is reporting this, and who is likely to read about it. Newspaper circulation is especially important to them and this affects the newspapers they normally engage with as they want their activities to reach as far as possible. Participants expect stories to be printed, aired or broadcasted in order to bring favourable publicity for their organisations. "If we do a programme we do newspaper clippings to find out how far the story has gone. We look at the publicity aspect. We also look at the feedback that we receive from the public or the response that we receive in terms of our businesses," said one participant. Press clippings are used to measure the estimate of people who are likely to see the story and react to it, as posed by one participant: "when we get prime coverage then

we know the coverage for that story is really high based on the platform that it came from. So, when we do our clippings we have an estimated people we know that have seen the story. For online we know the hits on the website, we calculate the number of people who have seen the story and for print we know the circulation.” One of the participants gave a scenario to emphasis her view on the importance of media clippings:

Interestingly I had to educate my chief executive on why press clippings was necessary. When he came in as the new chief executive, he felt that clippings going to him was not necessary. I needed to have time with him and told him that you need to know how we are presented in the media and because of that the perception held of us and how that can impact our business so you need to know and you need to know how your competitors out there are doing and how you can position yourself to also counter that. So, media clippings play a critical role in what we do. Knowing what your competitors are doing or what people are thinking of you and how your activities are being reported is very crucial.

From the point of view of this participant, media clippings go beyond knowing what has been written about the organisation. It also involves knowing what competitors are doing and what is happening within the industry in general. This view is shared by almost all the participants even though some were not explicitly stated. According to one participant:

we do media monitoring on a daily basis. We have termed it market intelligence so every day we look at what is happening in the market, us, our competitors, and we see how we can either counteract or see what we can do in that regard. We use traditional as well as online media to find out what is happening within the industry.

This is corroborated by another participant who says: “We do what we call media intelligence/clippings as well as competitor analysis. What is working and what is not working, what are customers saying, are there things we can look at and shape them?”

In the words of another participant:

The media clippings will tell you whether you will get your story published successfully. So, when we take the clippings we also read what has actually been written. We do a content analysis on the clippings. We look at coverage. We look at what was actually said, is it something that is going to improve or dent our image. We therefore use it as a way of measuring whether the story going out has been done the right way, whether our message has been carried out well, which newspapers carried the story etc. Media clippings play a major role in what we do because if I am able to get it in *Daily Graphic* then I know that a higher number of people are going to read it.

The relevancy of media clippings is also seen in this statement by a participant from one of the banks: “For me I have a target and I need to ensure that I have some public awareness about the brand and the product. So, every quarter I should have a minimum of two (2) PR stories either in print or radio. I am measured by that. If you have at least those numbers of awareness it is good.”

The result of the interviews shows that many of the participants regard media clippings as more than a measurement tool. Sometimes the clippings form the basis for other activities participants undertake. Participants look not only at the number of stories, but also the quality and nature of coverage. To this end, some of the participants engage in content analysis (either by themselves or through an agency) to measure the quality of the reportage. This enables participants to know if the report will have any impact or not. In the words of a participant:

We engage in a lot of media monitoring. The Ghana Media Report for instance shows the media behaviour of the various organisations and the impact. Who has more voice or has more attention? We use these reports to further do a research. The report gives you an inclination of what is happening. If I want it to be more specific and tailored to my organisations, I engage the agency to do that. The agencies show us the number of times we have appeared on radio and so on. We use content analysis for most of these things.

Another participant also pointed out that: “I want to see which media, where in the media, the nature of the coverage e.g. the thematic angles that were raised. So, media clipping is a fair indicator but the quality of the coverage is the greatest measure.”

Others also made the following comments on the subject:

We use that to measure affinity, how people associate with the brand. We measure through clippings what others are doing. If you watch the financial sector they all seem to be doing the same thing but different names. The clippings help to know what is happening in the industry, what can you add or learn from. What can you stop that is not helping the brand, and

“It is more to collect historical data and also to check media bias concerning the company. So, we go through the dailies and online and clip for the sake of it and also see how that influences us.” This confirms the findings of a European study (Zerfass et al 2010) that found that 82% of practitioners monitored clips and media response. Padidar (2010) admonishes practitioners to move beyond the number of times their stories appeared in the media and analyse the true value of each instance of media coverage. This will enable practitioners to determine whether organisational/client goals were met. In simple terms, practitioners must determine the effectiveness of programmes through scientific means rather than depend on quantity of media coverage.

In reviewing the responses, participants appear to focus strongly on traditional methods of media monitoring/clippings more than online. Emphasis is placed on traditional broadcast and newspaper methods while minimum attention is paid to online analytics. This does not mean participants do not engage in online analytics. However, attention to online clippings, including social media, is minimal in the case of many of the participants. Watson (2007: 200) asserts that the advancement of digital technology has shifted focus from a one-to-one model of communication, often mediated by journalists, to a more one-to-all model of communication. Digital technology now allows audiences to turn to their own as sources of “unbiased, authoritative information.” This means that practitioners cannot focus on conventional media when monitoring.

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR, 2011) acknowledges the importance of measuring social media as it has a serious effect on PR practice. Monitoring allows practitioners not only to track what is being said about their organisations but also “identifying relevant conversation and then deciding on if, and how, to intervene on the basis of how these conversations impact - or might - the ability of clients/employers to meet their organisational goals” Watson (2014: 147). The Barcelona Principles also indicate the essence of measuring social media using measurement tools such as media content analysis, web and search analytics, sales and CRM data and survey data. The principles also called for a measurement based on engagement “conversation” and “communities” instead of “coverage” and what it calls “vanity metrics” such as likes (Leggetter, 2015). The lack of focus on online evaluation is consistent with a study by the European Communication Monitor that identified “coping with the digital evolution and the social web” as a critical issue for communication managers (Zerfass, Verčič, Verhoeven, Moreno & Tench, 2015: 40). Phillips and Young (2009: 237) posit the need to monitor, measure, and weigh the effects of PR interventions online. They suggest that monitoring, measurement, and evaluation takes on a more critical role as the internet continues to mediate organisational activities. Watson and Noble (2007: 208), however, consider the online evaluation as a “black hole” mainly because most practitioners today started their career long before the digital era. Practitioners therefore monitor online coverage like they do print.

The need for online measurement and evaluation has been touted in literature but this appears not to be the case within the financial services sector. Wright and Hinson (2013), for instance, found little progress in the measurement and evaluation of social or emerging media. Jeffrey (2013: 2) therefore suggests that most PR practitioners have no “real idea of what is working and what is not working in their social and digital programmes.” Clearly, the evolution of the internet and digital media means that discussions on PR measurement cannot ignore the important role of social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. Businesses now want to know what is being said about them online more than ever. Focus has shifted from traditional media to online media. Measurement practices for organisations have expanded with practitioners now expected to track and analyse total media coverage using different metrics such as circulation, PR value, tone, site visits, blog comments, tweets, retweets, followers, fans and more (Padidar, 2010).

Another observation made is that many of the participants do not really analyse the clippings in detail but simply engage in counting. One participant made this point clear when he said: “we do media clippings alright, but we don’t necessarily analyse them.” For these participants, the more the organisation and its services are reported positively, the greater the mileage, but in terms of actual content and potential impact, these are not really analysed. The result feeds into the concern of Grunig (2008: 89) about the tendency of practitioners to use media monitoring to show the value of their programmes.

Practitioners as disseminators of accurate information: The debate over whether it is right for practitioners to withhold negative information and only put out positive information has been ongoing for more than a decade. Ethical dimensions have been raised on this issue and there appears to be no consensus on the subject. The literature examined earlier shows that overall, practitioners believe that their purpose is to disseminate accurate information about their organisations but not to volunteer negative information. One of the four models of PR reviewed earlier - public information - describes practitioners as “journalists-in-residence - whose purpose is to promote the dissemination of accurate information but not to volunteer negative information. This is to protect the reputation of the organisation that will result in any possible loss of business. To this end, any information that will lead to possible negative public opinion will not be volunteered. Van Heerden (2004: 174), in her research on practice of PR in Africa, reports that 71% of African PR practitioners agree with the assertion that the purpose of PR is to disseminate accurate information but not volunteer negative information. Kim (2009: 152) also notes that some practitioners in South Korea, as part of their PR strategy, consider information manipulation an important aspect of gaining favourable publicity in the media while keeping negative publicity out of the media focus. Nawaf (2014: 222) found the same situation in his research on PR practice in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

In the financial services sector, one must be careful of the information one relays to the public in order not to cause fear and panic. In the last decade several financial institutions in Ghana have collapsed - the latest being two high profile banks which collapsed in August 2017 and were taken over by one of the State banks, GCB Bank

Ltd - resulting in huge financial losses to clients. Another has been taken over by the regulatory bank and handed over to KPMG to manage to prevent it from collapsing. Some of these institutions were later found to have been in financial distress but failed to communicate this to their key publics. This has increased suspicion among publics of these institutions. Globalisation and the rapid evolution of technology in the world, and Ghana for that matter, means that the demand for accountability and transparency is very high. Stakeholders want access to information to enable them to make valid decisions. PR practitioners are caught in the middle of this as they are regarded as the holders of organisational information.

There was no real agreement among participants regarding the view that “the purpose of PR is to disseminate accurate information but not to volunteer unfavourable information.” Overall, many of the participants felt that the situation is not black and white, but circumstances will dictate the approach to take. Others firmly believed that withholding of negative information is the right thing because at the end of the day it is the organisation that pays their salary. A few were however of the view that hiding unfavourable information is not worth the risk if you truly value your publics. These participants also argued that it will be extremely difficult to hide unfavourable information in this era of digitisation and the high demand for transparency.

One participant who supports the withholding of information made the following comment:

I can tell you for sure in one of our local dialect that nobody points the left finger to his home or to his village. There is a way to manage communication but at the end of the day nobody throws dirt at himself. I wouldn't throw dirt at my institution I wouldn't do it. If there are things we are not doing right, on the quiet we try to correct them and make them better, but it is not in my interest or it is not my role to go and communicate all the wrong things. I am not saying we as PR practitioners we hide information, but as practitioners we give information on need to know basis. If you need to know yes, you'll have it. It is an open door policy. If a system is not working why will I want to let the client know this is not working, it's on a need to know basis. I don't need to go tell you information that is of no relevance to you.

For this participant: “you always want a good image for your organisation and to that effect you must sometimes keep out bad information that will not inure to the benefit of your organisation. There is a saying that *you don’t wash your dirty linen in public*.” The idea of not washing one’s dirty linen in public is a popular saying in Ghana to reflect the fact that it is not every issue that must come out in the public domain. A lot of participants cited this as a reason why practitioners have to manage negative information rather than letting their stakeholders know. One participant, who is actually a marketer but who is practicing PR, justified this by aligning it with the definition of PR: “I think this is obvious if you look at the definition of PR. You don’t want the bad news to go out so even if there is bad news you need to manage it internally. You expose yourself if you send all information out. For customers, we have a complaint mechanism to address that.” This attempted justification is supported by another participant: “PR is doing something good and getting credit for it so who will actually go ahead and say negative things about their organisation. Unless of course something has happened, and everyone is aware of it and you can’t deny it. Otherwise you’ll always say something nice to build your image.” In further agreement, a participant noted that: “of course who wants to wash their dirty linen in public. You don’t go singing loudly about your negative side. You project the positive side and manage the negative story. It is only natural to do that.” An example by a participant sums up the need to sometimes keep negative information away from the public domain:

It is image we are talking about. As much as you can you will not want to hide but to manage negative information. In the industry in which we work, negative news can lead to the closure of a bank. For instance, if some armed robbers break into the bank and it becomes banner headline in the mainstream media customers who hear are likely to panic. They will think these guys are supposed to be custodians of my savings and can no longer be trusted. And if such news comes to me as a practitioner it is not likely I will inform the public because we are not only talking about image here but operational risk as well. People trust us to keep their money but if the office can be raided by thieves, I will do as much as I can to make sure this story doesn’t come out. If it

comes out you are likely to lose your customers as people are likely to panic and come in to take their money.

Most participants are of the view that information dissemination is a two dimensional affair and not a straightjacket thing. For such participants, if the issue is not something big and can be managed internally and quickly, there will be no point in informing the publics. However, if it is a crisis or something that is likely to have a huge impact on the publics, it is essential for the public to know and assist in the resolution.

It depends on the situation. It's not everything that has to come out in the public domain. Again, it depends on what has actually happened. If you have a crisis on your hands there is no point for you to hold the negative information, you have to come out with it because it is the truth. It is better to come out with the truth and face the harsh reality than to hide it for people to get to know about it later on.

Commenting further on this, the female participant of one of the largest financial institutions in the country said:

Would you show your negative side? Negative news sells better than the positive. So, the media people come around the positive and that is not what is of interest to them. They want the negative and too much of the negativity will impact the bottom-line. At the end of the day that is what is running the business. However, it is important to manage it, not necessarily keep it out but you would want to manage it. Since we have a broad array of media it will be virtually impossible to suppress it. If you suppress it here it will appear somewhere else so what you can do is to try and manage it. What we do know is that when there is negative information, we package it and put it out there in the media, but we don't try to bury it. You can't do that, and I won't even suggest it.

A female participant who works with one of the private banks had this to say:

I think it is not so black and white. I think there are certain negative information you don't want to have in the public space but there are certain occasions where you can use so called negative information as

an opportunity to showcase your vulnerability if that might be useful for whatever campaign you will be launching. It depends but typically you would want to put out as much positive information as possible because that's really the best thing but there are some situations in which a less than positive story could still help you in the eyes of the public. From a bank perspective, because we are in the financial services industry there is a lot of confidential information that does not need to be disseminated on a wide scale even internally. Certain information needs to be communicated on a need to know basis so there are some innocuous negative information you could share just so that people are aware of what is going on. But in all these things I think it is better to be upfront and honest with your publics that this is what I promised to do but wasn't able to do for these reasons and this is what we are doing to ensure we achieve it.

Generally, most participants agree that due to the sensitive nature of the financial services sector, one has to be careful what information goes out. It is essential to manage negative information in order to maintain positive impression. On the other hand, where the public deserves the right to know, practitioners are obligated to do. One of the participants was strongly of the view that it would not be wise to keep negative information from the public:

I think anyone who is doing that is fighting a losing battle. In this current age of social media, the speed with which information goes out, there is nothing that you can keep secret. It is always better when the company owns up to the problem and then handles it because if you don't manage it someone will manage it for you.

Some participants suggest that hiding critical information will be seen as “dishonest and unethical” and the organisation will be in big trouble if it backfires. “If it is bad, manage it in a way that will not damage your brand but be honest to your stakeholders.” The need for honesty and transparency was also raised by a participant who believes that it is professionally wrong to keep negative information away from the public.

We stand for transparency and best practice, which means your

stakeholders must know whatever is happening. It will be wrong on my part as a professional and the institution's part to hide information from customers, and so regular communication is important. If something is not right it is important to inform the stakeholders and take the right steps to resolve it. We report on what has gone wrong but immediately we announce the plan of restoring the situation. I believe that if you keep hiding it one day it's going to blow up in your face.

This is supported by a participant who has been in the industry for more than 30 years:

One of the primary functions of PR is value creation. Mutually beneficial value creation on the back of very robust relationships. If you want a relationship which is enduring and leads beyond generations then you need one that is predicated on very strong trust and trust is always driven by openness and transparency. So, I wouldn't want to go screaming that I am naked, but I would want to tell my key publics that I have issues with my clothes and I am fixing it and I make sure I fix it. And more so in this world where the ability to keep information under wraps has become a nuclear test. It has become very difficult because of the proliferation of all the channels and the intensity of citizen journalism. And so trying to hide things especially bad news is a huge and daunting task. At worst I will say the proper thing for the practitioner to do is to tell the truth.

Another participant made the following comment:

My orientation in PR is that information is information. For accurate information disseminate and disseminate wide. For negative information it is equally important you don't keep the populace in the dark because sometimes when you put the lead on negative information and it blows up in your face, the result will be worse than if you had reported it. So, I believe you admit that it is a challenge and give the assurance that you've taken steps to correct that defect or challenge. For instance, in my previous organisation it was one of the cardinal principles. Admit and assure that steps are being taken to correct the defect. So, I always say that yes, when it is good news blow it up when

it is bad news admit that something is gone wrong and give the assurance that whatever went wrong management is taking steps to address it but not to deceive the public to say no it never happened.

The issue of transparency, especially during a crisis, has been highlighted by scholars. Transparency and accountability are seen as not an option but a must. This feeds into the principle “Tell it all, tell it fast, tell the truth.” Coombs (2007) also discusses the need for information dissemination with speed, accuracy, and consistency in a crisis situation. This is especially so within the financial services sector where there are suspicions of more financial institutions on the verge of collapsing, leading to anxiety among the public. What is interesting is that many of the participants who advocated transparency, honesty, and truth were those who had an actual PR/communication background (had either a Masters or Diploma in PR).

PR practitioners as negotiators and mediators and not neutral disseminators of information: The literature reviewed in earlier chapters reveals that PR practitioners are responsible for maintaining and sustaining relationship between the publics and the organisation. This is reflected in the concept of the practitioner as a boundary spanner, that is, linking the organisation and the publics together. The professional's duty is thus to “interpret the publics to management and management to the publics” (Seitel, 2007: 6). However, for this to occur, the practitioner must not be seen as one whose interest is only in disseminating ‘accurate’ information. Relationships are built on trust and credibility and the practitioner is expected to epitomise this. The traditional meaning of the negotiator/mediator role is one who looks at issues concerning both parties in a neutral, unbiased way in order to resolve a dispute. Practitioners are therefore viewed as responsible for managing the conflicting demands of different groups of publics by ‘navigating complex negotiations and relationships’ to the mutual benefit of all stakeholder groups. Practitioners are not to be disseminators of factual information if they are to achieve equilibrium between the organisation and stakeholder groups. Grunig and Repper (1992: 118) are, however, of the view that PR practice in many organisations is nothing more than neutral disseminators of information within the organisational structure. They suggest that practitioners and senior management attribute achievements to favourable publicity, good media relations, slick employee publications, among others.

The results from the interviews show that participants are active negotiators and mediators between management and key stakeholder groups. This is driven by the realisation to ensure a relationship that is mutually beneficial for both parties, as reflected in the comment of one participant: “you need to ensure harmony and in doing that you manage the relationship between the two groups. Other than that, what is the use....practitioners are not robotics, they are human beings whose duty it is to bridge the gap between two groups of people and not only serve as a channel for the dissemination of information.” The practitioner is expected to facilitate and consolidate the relationship between the organisation and the stakeholders and to that effect they must apply professionalism in their activities, as one participant acknowledged:

I believe that if the primary task of the practitioner is to facilitate and consolidate relationships between an institution and its publics then the practitioner should not be a conveyor belt. The practitioner needs to bring his professional expertise to the table and apply that to the growth of the relationship. Which would mean to a large extent the management of communication between the organisation and key stakeholders.

Another participant also acknowledged the importance of practitioners as mediators and negotiators, especially as communication management is a two-way affair:

It is important, as professionals, to manage the dialogue between the executive team and the public, including internal stakeholders, hardcore unions and various associations. Decisions taken by management must lead to an outcome that is beneficial to both parties.

One of the participants believed that practitioners sometimes “advocate more for our publics than even for the management side more so because we are the very department that manages the brand. So, anything that has the potential of negatively affecting the brand, management has to be brought into the known and decisions taken to prevent some of these things happening.

A participant raised an interesting point which seemed to disagree with comments his fellow participants made. He felt such a thing is unrealistic and more in theory than practice. “When I joined this organisation, I noticed that they didn’t have a number of

things so I made recommendations, but they were not taken, especially at the senior level. I am at the middle level of management. At that level I am involved in making recommendations but at the senior management level where my inputs are needed, I am not factored.” What this means is that this participant sees himself only as an implementer and a disseminator rather than a mediator. The Excellence Theory identifies the practitioner as a key part of the decision-making process. Practitioners can only counsel management if they are part of the decision-making body. The Excellence theory clearly states that for PR to be excellent, it must be practiced strategically by being part of the dominant coalition. The view of this participant is an indication that this is not the case in all situations. Another participant was also of the view that the ability to serve either as a negotiator or neutral disseminator is dependent on the structure of the organisation as well as the individual practitioner.

In today's PR world in most organisations, the roles have been so broken down that depending on where you find yourself and your strength as an individual and the structured organisation you may either be a glorified messenger or a strategist. In the days of old we didn't have something like investor relations where somebody needed to engage investors as a totally different role. Information mainly went through the PR. If you go to some organisations, they have head of regulators as well as people in charge of traditional authorities. All these are PR roles, but they won't necessarily be as a PR information dissemination function. It is a way of engaging the stakeholders.

The term *glorified messenger* is often used to refer to practitioners who mainly disseminate information or decisions made by management. In the words of one participant, such people cannot be regarded as PR practitioners. They are either “information or press officers because PR involves professionalism.” This participant further noted that even in situations where a practitioner is disseminating information “you don't just take what is given to you. You must critique it because you also have your image at stake. What I am sending out, will it project the image of the organisation, what about me signing and also distributing. Does it contain any element of propaganda or is it balanced and professional.” What it means is that the information disseminated must be accurate and credible because it is the image of both the

organisation and the profession that is at stake. Sending a message as neutral disseminator without looking at the implication will not benefit either the organisation or the profession. Participants from the interviews generally do not believe that as a professional, one has to be active in the management of relationship between the organisation and its publics. Being a neutral disseminator of information rather than an active negotiator and mediator between management and publics is the essence of PR. These responses corroborate what literature says about the need to be an active participant if the practitioner is to succeed in maintaining a relationship that is mutually beneficial.

Writing and production of stories: Writing and production of stories for publication is a critical aspect of a communicator's work. Writing, as literature shows, must be based on research. Research and writing go hand in hand for the PR professional. Results generally show that participants in the financial services sector mostly prioritised the writing and production of stories over research. Participants admitted that much as research is important, the nature of their work does not give them enough time to do much research. Research is sometimes done but rarely. Much of the research done is mainly informal in nature. For some of the participants, research is usually given to an agency while they concentrated on the writing process. One participant admitted that the lack of a communication research unit has contributed to the lack of research.

This department is made up of social media, events and protocol, media management, and brand management and webmaster. So, we are always churning out information for internal and external consumption....unfortunately whenever we try to engage an external agency to do research for us, management will say, but we know the problems already. Much as I try to convince them that this is for purely communication research to know what we are doing right or wrong, it doesn't work. For example, we rebranded some years back, but the department was not in charge because management felt it should be a project. In the end they were using people put together. So now a few years down the line nobody is really thinking about research to determine whether the message we drove has gone down. I want to do that, but I am still having challenges pushing it because it is not a priority to

management. Everybody thinks we know it so it doesn't matter. But that will determine the kind of communication you are putting out there. I need to find out whether all those things have made impact.

In the case of this participant, the willingness is there but the challenge is the lack of management support. This is consistent with the views of Bowen et al (2012: 77) that practitioners often face a challenge of convincing senior management about the need to fund research. Senior management in every organisation is responsible for making quality decisions that lead to achievement of organisational goals. However, good decision-making is dependent on the quality of information/data available. Senior management works with information from various sectors including PR. The practitioner uses data from research to counsel senior management on what to do and what not to do in order to constantly establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and the publics. However, gathering quality information will not be possible without research. Support of senior management is thus critical to the effectiveness of PR, as has been highlighted by literature.

Another participant attributed the lack of research to budgetary constraints. One of the key problems often raised by participants for not doing research is the issue of budget. Literature agrees with this. Smith (2017: 351) for instance, contends that because PR is often seen as dealing with “hard-to-measure” intangibles like visibility and goodwill, organisations tend to set budgets according to a formula that is based on the previous year’s budget or as an arbitrary percentage of the bigger administration or marketing programme. When this happens, PR loses out to other departments such as marketing. Due to low budgets participants have resorted to working with mainly informal research and sometimes by “intuition” to drive home organisational messages. The following comments shows this:

I believe we can do a lot more to inform how we react to the market and we can do that through research. We do the general one because it serves us but there are several things that we can actually do which we do not do purely because of budget. Very few organisations actually give priority to the communications department. Sometimes you need the buy-in of executive management and sometimes personal interventions of people to get things done.

Speaking in agreement, a participant from the insurance industry noted:

Unfortunately, in our environment research has not taken root. In some organisations you can't do without research but in the service industry you are looking at what the competition is doing, your intelligence is what you pick from the market. We don't have a scientific way of measuring issues, so research plays almost close to nil."

Literature suggests that practitioners are not actually satisfied with the unscientific nature of most of their evaluations even though these types of methods are used extensively (Baskin, Hahn, Seaman & Reines, 2010). On the issue of budget, another participant commented that

Here we are focused on what will yield the big financial benefits so research, although is a critical part of being able to roll out successful products and services, is not always carried out. Sometimes you look at the immediate short term of what needs to be done so research may be overlooked. I think when you have a bigger budget you are able to put more on research.

Literature has identified insufficient or lack of budget as one of the major reasons practitioners give for not engaging in research, especially scientific research (Macnamara, 2015, Baskin et al 2010). Literature however, identifies some cost-effective research methods such as mini-surveys, which use small samples, omnibus surveys, and online surveys (Macnamara, 2015: 4). Other tools that practitioners can use include formal and informal methods like case studies, consultative groups, online feedback forums, and self-administered e-surveys (Macnamara, 2015: 5). Lindenmann (in Wilcox et al 2015:225) also point out that research can be done with limited budget and time. Literature clearly shows the gulf between what practitioners say about the importance of research and actual practice.

Writing appears to dominate the activities of participants because that is the means by which people get to know about the organisation, especially in a competitive environment. Some participants only see the need for research when there is an incident. One participant in particular noted: "we don't do PR research because we don't have the need for research unless something has happened." Literature though does not support this stand. PR practitioners have to work with accurate information

about “the situations they face, the audiences they communicate with, effectiveness of their communication efforts and the overall impact the programme has on building and maintaining relationships with critical stakeholders” (Bowen et al 2010: 87). Research is therefore necessary to ensure goals and objectives are properly constructed and achieved. Research therefore gives value to PR efforts.

A participant who has worked in the profession for more than 30 years had a different perspective. He believed that the quality of a practitioner’s writing is ultimately linked to research so the two cannot be separated. “If you want to do quality writing your research needs to be solid and deep. For example, one of our core areas of activity is content generation as a means of deepening relationship and if you are going to generate and create content you need very solid research.” This comment was supported by two other participants who said: “both have their roles to play and one cannot take the place of the other,” and,

I think you can't actually publish without having done your research. Research first and foremost is very important in every writing that you do. And research doesn't necessarily mean researching into your own organisation. You can also research into what competitors have done. At the end of the day whatever you come up with plot into the general psyche of the publics because let us bear in mind that you are not an island. Whatever you are doing goes to impact the global landscape.

These statements are consistent with the views of Newsom and Haynes (2008: 59-60) and Smith (2008: 75) on the importance of research to the writing process. Several reasons have actually been muted by researchers for the focus on writing more than research. Some have attributed the lack of research to a lack of knowledge/expertise in research by practitioners (Grunig, 2014; Baskin, Han, Seaman & Reines, 2010). Austin and Pinkleton (2015: 13) suggest that the challenge practitioners face in the area of research is due to the fact that practitioners are trained mostly as writers rather than as social scientists. Practitioners therefore tend to argue that building and maintaining relationships is a ‘fuzzy business’, which is difficult to quantify. This attitude, however, makes the PR position vulnerable to organisational cost cutting and restructuring

The use of informal research in the writing process by some participants also came up during the interview. Participants believe that research must be given the same priority as writing and production of stories. Many though admit that in reality this is not the case and as such research, especially scientific research, is done usually once or twice a year while informal research is done often. For most participants, they do not have their own research department and so communication research, when done, is conducted as part of general industry research. One organisation mostly engaged in “brand health check” to check the strength of brands. Specific research to gauge attitudes and opinions on the organisation and how these might affect the organisation is done as part of a general customer satisfaction survey. The focus though is more on marketing-oriented research questions than communication. To ensure credibility and mobility in management as well as to insure against ‘cost cutters’, practitioners will have to use the scientific management approach, as postulated by Broom and Dozier (1990).

5.3.2.3. Two-Way Asymmetric Communication

Literature identifies the two-way asymmetry as close to the ideal form of excellent PR. The model is rooted in persuasive communication and is premised on sound research. The purpose is to generate some form of agreement between the organisation and stakeholders. In the two-way asymmetric model, feedback from research is used to develop strategies that are more persuasive but not necessarily to change the position of the organisation. In the end, the asymmetry is still one-way although it has a strong semblance of two-way. Literature again indicates that this model is practiced consistently in many organisations, on most occasions as part of other models.

Earlier, the study revealed that writing and production of stories for publication is mostly given a priority over research, although for some, this situation is more based on circumstances than a deliberate attempt to avoid research. Others also did indicate that research is the basis on which publications are done even though most of the research is informal in nature. The two-way asymmetry is focused on the use of scientific research to understand public attitude and alter such attitudes to favour the organisation. Research is used not to maintain balance but to increase positive attitude towards the organisation before any PR programme is conducted. A series of questions were asked to determine whether this is the case in the financial services

sector.

Use of attitudinal research: As noted earlier in literature the use of formative research to determine public attitude before a PR programme is undertaken is considered to be critical to understanding publics and tailoring the right messages for them. Attitude research allows practitioners to measure and interpret the views, feelings, values, opinions, and beliefs a public may have toward an organisation/client, issue or product (Stacks & Bowen, 2013: 2). This is normally done before a major PR programme is undertaken. The Excellence theory articulates that for PR programmes to be managed strategically they must be based on formative research. The results revealed that attitudinal/formative research is hardly done, if ever at all. Most participants acknowledge that they do not really do formal attitudinal research. “What we do is mostly informal. We try to do that through interactions with clients and based on their responses we realise that something may be wrong, and we work on it,” said one participant. Another participant opined that although she is very interested in doing attitudinal research, she is very much handicapped as she is not getting the necessary support. The mantra of management is that “we know what people are thinking of us already,” and this makes it difficult for her. She continues:

I want to believe that the strategy we use works but what do I have to scientifically prove it. I am just using feedback I get to say that we should be well represented especially on social media and move towards the youth to drive even the tagline. So, research is not playing a key role as it should because people think that we can do without it, but for us here it is relevant, and we are still pushing for it.

A participant was frank when he said, “here we mostly adopt a knee jerk approach”, meaning that programmes are conducted without proper research. This participant gave the following example to buttress his point:

The organisation decided to embark on a rebranding exercise a few years ago. However, a proper rebranding exercise must have been preceded by certain perception research. That was not done because of the group arrangement. Because we belong to a bigger group, a lot of things come

from the centre and implemented across without reference to the local environment. Things are just rolled out as if that is how it ought to be done and you don't take into account the views of your publics and a lot of insult starts coming into your face. All these could have been averted if research had been done.

For PR to succeed, management support is critical. This appears not to be the case in some situations. The participant from one of the top insurance companies in Ghana also shared the view that one needs the support of management to embark on these kinds of research.

The last time we did any kind of research was about seven years ago. In fact, just last week when I was doing my marketing presentation to management, the information I used to share with them the public perception about us was from that document and they were like when was this done and I said well the last time we committed to doing anything of this nature was seven years ago. So, it just shows how much attention management gives to some of these things. Some managers do not understand why we should pay money for research. To them, 'we can hear what the people are saying about us.' So currently research plays very little role.

A participant who is the marketing communication manager of a bank noted that the focus of research is more marketing-oriented than PR. This participant indicated that the department mostly focused on competitor analysis but "in terms of communication or attitudinal research, we don't really have to do research because we have an idea of what we need to do and what we need not do." The literature reviewed earlier revealed that sometimes researchers focus on their intuition rather than scientific research to determine public perception. A review on literature on this subject shows that research is hardly done by practitioners and where it is done, it tends to be mostly informal in nature (Macnamara, 2008; Watson & Noble, 2007). Wilcox et al (2015: 150) acknowledge the importance of gathering information and collecting as well as interpreting data before embarking on any PR programme. Without it, it will be difficult for the organisation to make any effective policy decision and map out strategies for

effective programmes. Engaging in knowledge and attitudinal research enables practitioners to develop methods that persuade the public to behave as the organisation desires.

For those who engage in attitudinal research, it is mostly done at the end of the year as part of broader marketing research. This situation is mainly due to the fact that almost all the communication departments do not have their own research unit. Most of the research is therefore focused on marketing outcomes rather than attitudinal. Research is therefore not done at the beginning of campaigns, but at the end of the year and this is what is used for the following year. Most of the participants engage in client satisfaction surveys as part of broader marketing research to gauge attitudes of clients regarding their products and services.

A few use dipstick surveys to determine perception and attitudes before a PR programme such as the launch of an event. One of the very experienced communication managers had a strong view on attitudinal research. According to this participant:

Attitudinal research plays quite a significant role. It is part of the environmental recognisance and monitoring. Our duty as practitioners is to be the sentry and also to be the town crier. It is important we have a pulse and a feel for what is happening and one of the most objective ways of getting clear indications will be attitudinal research. So that becomes very essential for us. The reason you need the information is to be able to recalibrate the attitude towards the organisation and you roll out interventions to be able to send it out to the level that you want. Also, you are able to engage your internal stakeholders and give them a view of what the situation is and bring them on board on what the interventions are to ensure that their attitudes and sentiments are in the right orbit.

He indicated that his department had its own research wing and not part of the overall organisational research department. This allows them to develop the right research tools which are focused entirely on communication activities. This participant is not the only one who focuses mostly on PR research. Another participant, who obviously

realises the crucial nature of attitudinal research, noted:

Initially we did not have a good perception, especially after we rebranded. We therefore engaged the services of an agency to give us a sense of how things have improved, and the results were really good. From time to time we survey our customers to get a better sense of what we are doing wrong or how we can improve our operational practices as well as certain aspects of our products and services. So, we do that quite frequently in house through our service quality department and we also do engage some of our sales team to assist us depending on if we are launching a product or campaign.

Methods used are both formal and informal, but this participant does recognise the essence of attitudinal research. She acknowledged that formal research is not done as much as she would have liked but at least on a yearly basis the department organises research to continue to track the progress of the organisation with regards to stakeholder attitude. Formal research is mostly handled by external agencies as the organisations do not have the resources for larger external research. The informal ones, on the other hand, are done in-house. Participants use either qualitative or quantitative depending on the kind of research they want to do.

The comments above denote that market-oriented research is mostly the focus of large scale research in the financial services sector. Perception and attitudinal research is incorporated at some point in the marketing research process. Very few engage in full scale attitudinal research to gauge public attitude before any PR programme is embarked upon. For many of these participants, attitudinal research is also informal and based on interaction with some key stakeholders, including internal staff. In discussing the complex nature of attitude research, Austin and Pinkleton (2015: 352) articulate that attitude research does not measure only what the stakeholders say but also what they know and think (mental or cognitive predisposition), what they feel (their emotions), and their actions (their motivational or drive tendencies). They note that attitude research is much more difficult and expensive to carry out due to the processes it goes through. This means that for effective programmes to be planned, practitioners

must use a rigorous scientific process to gather relevant data.

Persuasion of publics to act in line with organisational goals: The activities that practitioners engage in are meant to influence the public to have a positive attitude towards the organisation. When this happens, organisations will be given the legitimacy to operate. Stakeholders are likely to act in favour of the organisation. Literature acknowledges that the ultimate goal of every practitioner is to get stakeholders to behave in line with the goals of their organisations. Excellent/symmetric PR has therefore been called unrealistic and idealistic (Grunig & White, 1992: 45).

For participants in the financial services sector, persuading publics to do business with the organisation is critical to their work. They therefore play a huge role. In most cases, they are the ones driving the persuasion agenda. “We do it on two fronts; internally we drive engagement. We lay the engagement objective of the bank, working in tandem with our human resource department. Externally it is our baby. Ensuring the right alignment between us and key publics is a very important performance area for us.” The goal of the communication department is to ensure that publics continue to do business with the organisation, while attempting to get more publics on board. There is keen competition in the financial services sector; practitioners work 24/7 to ensure the organisation remains competitive and that publics act in line with organisational goals by remaining in business with them. “We aim to improve the bottom-line while also promoting the values of the organisation. So, whenever we get feedback on issues from any of our branches, we develop strategies to work on it. We use the branch managers to engage the stakeholders because most of these issues happen purely at the branch level.” The director of communication of one of the banks also pointed out that:

In selling a product the onus is on the department to be persuasive enough in terms of our communication and marketing campaigns to ensure that people patronise the bank’s services and also have a certain view of the bank based on how we guide them. Our communication in terms of the tone, the structure even from the images that we use, is meant to guide people to think about the organisation in a certain way both internally and externally.

The participants develop strategies, mostly based on informal research, aimed at persuading publics, both internal and external, to view the organisation in a positive perspective. The purpose is to drive sales and retain staff. “We need to drive sales and marketing. We have no business apart from creating value for customers. To do effective selling, we must impress on perception and that’s what we do. We improve the acceptance of the organisation through various means.”

A participant in the insurance industry posited that as part of the strategies to engage the public, he holds a dinner meeting for the top 50 clients of the organisation in various parts of the country:

Whenever we are opening a branch or visiting a region for an activity, I ensure we bring together the top 50 clients in the region and have a dinner with them, together with my MD. These clients appreciate what we do for them and it allows them to be committed to the organisation. So, anything to do with the publics, including getting them to believe and buy into what we do, is my responsibility.

A female participant used the term “influence” rather than persuasion to describe how she gets publics to buy into the organisation’s objectives. “What we do is to influence our publics to understand the importance of insurance and why they have to take insurance and not wait till a disaster happens before they call on the government or organisations to come to their aid. Once they understand it this way, they willingly decide that we think this is important to our lives, so we’ll take it.”

Evaluation of PR programmes: Much has been said about the importance of evaluation in PR. The Excellence theory describes the importance of evaluative research in determining the effectiveness of a PR programme. Evaluation is necessary to measure both the short-term effects of PR programmes on the cognitions, attitudes, and behaviours of publics and management, as well as the long-term effects of PR programmes on the quality of relationships between organisations and publics (Grunig & Grunig, 2008: 340). However, evidence available also indicates a lack of effort in evaluation and where this is done it is mostly informal in nature. Evaluation is a core part of the work of participants in the financial services sector. Every programme or activity that is done is evaluated. Significantly, measurement does not occur only at

the end of the programme for some participants. A few participants were of the view that monitoring occurs during the implementation stage of PR activities and this allows them to tweak or amend the programme to enhance its chances of success. Evaluation is done using both formal and informal methods, although informal methods dominate. The major ones, which are mostly given to agencies, are done at the end of the year as part of broader organisational research. This research is mostly headed by the research wing of the organisation.

Commenting on the use of evaluation, a participant articulated the point that he and his team develop various metrics for evaluating PR programmes and this is done as part of the planning process.

We agree on what methods and metrics before the programme goes on. We bring all the stakeholders involved and discuss the various angles as to how to measure them. We have a 360 view and so closure only happens when we have done our measurement and post-event review based on the evaluation.

Another participant noted that although they want to evaluate every programme, sometimes it is difficult because of the resources available to her department. "Evaluation is a key part of our work. Unfortunately for us our resources are not as expansive as I will like so once we do launch a programme, we have to move on to the next one." She was however quick to acknowledge the need to evaluate a programme:

Regardless of the challenges, we are still mindful that whatever we have done in the past we have to keep track. We have to monitor how successful it is. What can we learn from that campaign or initiative that can inform our future campaigns so that we don't make the same mistake or we're capitalising on the changing trends in the market. Things change. What was relevant yesterday may not be relevant today so we actually have to adapt and monitor and see how our approach and strategy is working in the market.

A participant admitted that the organisation cannot move forward if it does not know how it performed during its programmes. "We evaluate every programme to find out whether we met our objectives or not. What did we go overboard with that we can

reduce? When it comes to media for instance we have such good relations with them, so we get constant feedback from them.” Clearly, these assertions support literature on the importance of evaluation.

Evaluation ranges from informal methods such as impact on sales, enquiries, word of mouth, to more formal methods like media content analysis, interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. Informal or what some of the participants call “unscientific” methods of evaluation dominated what participants use. Commenting on evaluative methods, one participant noted: “We gauge the level of participation/attendance, word of mouth feedback and enquiries.” He acknowledges the unscientific nature of the methods but argued that “it gives you an idea of what it is, the level of interest, what you are doing is generating. For example, if you invite 100 people and only 10 attend, it means you are doing something wrong. However, if there is an overflow, it means people are very much interested in what you are doing and the publics want to be associated with you.”

Another determinant of evaluation is the use of websites and hotlines. Participants track the number of website hits as well as use call logs to evaluate the number of people who have visited the websites and also used the hotlines to make enquiries before, during, and after the programme. Word of mouth evaluation is especially popular among organisations. Participants therefore engage in several activities, including the ones cited earlier, as well as media monitoring to determine the level of discussion by publics on their activities. In addition to the use of media clippings, at least two of the participants also gauge the success or otherwise of their programmes through internal feedback. This is reflected in the following comments: “we mainly use clippings, feedback from my team, colleagues as well as board members,” and “evaluative research is essential, but it is mainly in the form of debriefing report. Sometimes it will just be a discussion with my team. Other times we ask a few people about the programme.” These methods also confirm the concerns of scholars (Grunig, 2008; Macnamara, 2008; Watson & Noble, 2007) that evaluation methods tend to be unscientific in nature.

There is a strong linkage between programme evaluation and effect on sales in the financial services sector. For participants, the ultimate goal of every PR activity is to drive sales. A lot of evaluative activities therefore appear to be marketing focused. The

following statements by some of the participants reflect this:

We evaluate our programmes by looking at growth in numbers. So now that customers know this, what is the acceptability of the communication we have sent out. We have a contact centre where customers call to inquire about product they have heard. So, we assess it from the call centre base.

We look at the patronage of product and services. How many people have actually signed on to the card or open an account. we look at basic numbers.

We do a lot of evaluative research, but the point is that when it comes to event we look at the immediate impact and that is based on the level of publicity given to the event. We want to know whether it actually affected the image of your brand and whether it drove sales.

And,

We know what our average monthly returns are on certain things so after the PR activities we go back and check to see if there is any rise in the products that we want to sell across to the public. If there is a rise in the figures then we know that the message is getting to the people. Sometimes people call us that they have heard about this promotion and give us feedback. Other times too we get feedback through the forms that people fill when they get to the branches. So, we get feedback from the messages we put out there and compile them and see what we are doing right or wrong.

One participant admitted that evaluation was not really strong in his organisation. He attributed this to the lack of support for PR in the organisation and this is something he is “working on to reverse.”

A few of the participants use a combination of formal and informal methods to gauge effect of programmes on the bottom-line. A participant explained in detail how he uses evaluative research:

We have many different levels and types of metrics. But ultimately it is about the outcomes and not the outputs. So, we do not typically measure output. For example, I wouldn't stop at the level of coverage I got. I am interested in the nature of the coverage and the impact the coverage had. So, we tend to be end result oriented and that translates into the metrics and the measurement we put in place which will be defined before execution and as part of the planning process. So, if we are doing something that involves stakeholders then invariably we are likely to agree on the metrics and measures we are going to use. There are several methods we use. If it is a service or a product I am very much interested in the way we communicate in a way which is easily consumed by key publics. So, in this instance feedback is a very important determinant. I am also interested in measuring exposure and reaction to the exposure and I also measure how that translates into any kind of value that we want out of that exposure. We therefore use media content analysis to gauge exposure. If it is a high end event we use interviews because of the depth of information we need. If it is more of a broad public activity where the publics are huge then I am likely to go through some quantitative forms and sometimes we even go to the extent of doing some quick surveys on phones.

The concept of evaluative research has been debated in literature for decades. The concerns that have been raised are that the focus of evaluation is mostly on output rather than outcomes. The result of this research gives an indication that this is the case in the financial services sector although outcomes are sometimes the focus as well. Methods of evaluation are also informal and unscientific. Participants attribute this to working with a small budget. Formal research therefore becomes the victim. In some institutions participants are assessed based on the value they bring to the organisation and this is reflected in the research they engage in, as one participant puts it: "I am assessed based on the result of the successful evaluation of my PR programmes. Management always wants to see to what effect we are spending the money given to us. Whether it is worth it." However, like most of the participants, this participant also uses word of mouth and informal methods to evaluate programmes. What is

interesting is that just about three (3) participants mentioned the use of social media as part of the evaluation process. Even this is done on a “very small scale,” as one participant said. This is not surprising as most of the participants indicated they did not have a presence on social media and were now making efforts to get on social media. Regardless there are several social media tools that practitioners are not taking advantage of. Two other participants said they use Google analytics to evaluate their programmes online as well. In effect most participants do not actively use online evaluation tools to gauge outputs and outcomes. This confirms earlier comments by Padidar (2010) about the focus on traditional methods of research to the detriment of social media.

5.3.2.4. Two-way symmetric communication

Development of mutual understanding: A review of the Systems theory shows that PR practitioners play a key role in maintaining and sustaining the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders. To this end, activities of PR departments are geared towards ensuring that both the organisation and the stakeholders operate from a common understanding. Practitioners are referred to as *boundary spanners*, serving as a link between the organisation and its publics. Practitioners are therefore duty bound to explain the organisation to the publics and the publics to the organisation (Seitel, 2007: 6-7). Participants are solely responsible for ensuring a mutual understanding between the organisation and its publics. The various activities that they engage in are meant to bring the organisation and publics closer. One participant noted: “we are constantly engaging our stakeholders and also monitoring to see if we are at the same level, and if there is a disconnect we quickly deal with the issue behind the disconnect.” A participant cited an example that has to do with the internal staff to further show the key role they play in ensuring mutual understanding:

Currently we are trying to get management to interact more with middle level management. If middle level management understands the strategy or management of the organisation they will run with it for us. We are telling management that there is a gap that needs to be filled.

One of the participants described how the department uses the chief executive as the focus of the organisation as a means to bridge the gap between the publics and the

organisation: “We like to think of the CEO as the brand custodian, the chief PR officer of the bank. So, we give the best preparation to whoever is CEO at the time. We are always minded by the fact that we want to project a certain image and he carries that image as the head of the bank.” Participants use different methods depending on the nature of the publics. This include staff durbars, quarterly meetings, dinner meetings with key clients, and customer satisfaction surveys. According to one of the participants, the PR department sometimes gets the CEO to engage an aggrieved customer because of the level of impact it will have. A female participant attempted to show the seriousness with which they play this role:

Every quarter we do customer satisfaction surveys, and this is disseminated to all heads of companies and marketing related programmes. The feedback is actually taken on board. For instance, we have redesigned a number of our policies based on customer feedback. We have changed our premium competition because customers have come out to say that you know what, we think this is high so do something about it. All that feedback we receive feeds into what we do and interestingly when things are implemented the customers come back and tell us oh we've seen that you've done this. Over the years customer complaints and customer dissatisfaction has really gone down because we are not only prompt but also responsive to their needs.

This proactiveness is not geared towards only external publics, but staff as well. Meetings are held with staff every quarter to deliberate on their concerns and these are taken to management and the department ensures that management works on the concerns. From the result, developing a mutual understanding is very paramount to the work of practitioners in the financial services sector. This is consistent with most of the definitions of PR (Wilcox et al 2015; Broom & Sha, 2012; Grunig, 1984), which put emphasis on developing and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and its publics. The financial services sector is very competitive in Ghana and this has not been helped by the collapse of some of these organisations. There is a lot of customer mistrust of the sector now and practitioners need to work overtime to ensure their stakeholders remain loyal to them. Ensuring a common understanding is therefore essential to their functions.

Use of research to determine level of understanding between management and publics: Research - formal and informal - is essential in symmetrical PR. Practitioners use the findings from research activities to develop strategies that will enhance the level of understanding between key stakeholders and management. Policies developed by management must reflect the concerns of publics. Through environmental scanning and formative research, practitioners engage both management and publics to create a mutual understanding. The result of the interviews supports what literature says. The forms of research differ depending on management value of PR activities, the goal is however, the same. A participant acknowledged that formal research was not done at his organisation but, “we get calls from observers and practitioners within the industry.” Apart from this, the department also “scans the environment through the use of media clippings, customer complaint forms etc.” Feedback from such methods is used to advise management on policy direction. Some of the participants indicated that when it comes to internal publics, they work with HR to do informal research which gauges the level of understanding between management and the internal publics. They also use suggestion boxes and complaints forms (for both internal and external publics) to determine the level of understanding between the two stakeholders.

For example, at the beginning of this year, there was an issue of payment of bonuses and it was filtering in through idle talk and we picked that kind of intelligence and realised the mood of the staff was not good. We were even going to do some CSR but when we gauged the mood of the staff we said this was the wrong time to do the CSR because it was supposed to be a staff volunteering initiative. We made management aware that you can't ask them to do volunteering work when they are talking about their money, so you can't ask them to come and donate their own money. These inform decisions that are taken. So, we do that even though sometimes not planned.

In agreement with the two participants, a third participant shared his experience:

We have different tiers of research. We have internal research which is very important because it is always important to have a beneficial view on what the internal sentiments are. If all the different publics within the organisation are properly working in tandem, then we are on the same

page. Then we have external research too. The objective is similar but the publics are different.

For this communication manager, he uses both formal and informal tools. Formal tools are used occasionally due to budgetary constraints. One of the participants had an interesting perspective, especially with regards to his organisation. According to this participant, his department mostly uses formal research when dealing with external publics:

Internal has however been problematic. Most of the time those heading the PR department are not part of the top management and so there is always a disconnect. This leads to distortion or prevention of information flow. Management is therefore on one end; the middle people are also on another side. Sometimes the one speaking to the issues is not even from the PR department. In this bank for instance sometimes the HR is the one in charge of internal communication which I found problematic because they are not trained communicators, so it created some sort of conflict. But we try to handle this by using feedback, which sometimes comes in the form of gossip. We try sometimes to use grapevine to improve understanding.

Despite the challenges that some of these communication managers go through, what is certain is that research is key in their efforts to develop a mutual understanding between management and publics, even though research is more informal than formal. This result confirms the findings from literature that informal research techniques are employed more often than formal techniques (Grunig et al 2002: 393). According to Broom and Dozier (1990: 90), time and budgetary constraints as well as the philosophy of the dominant coalition are key reasons why much of PR research is informal.

Purpose of PR to change behaviour: One of the key activities that the practitioner performs as a *boundary spanner* is to ensure that both management and publics understand each other. In this regard the PR practitioner works to ensure that attitude of management towards the public aligns with the behaviour of the publics. The change process is two-way, which should lead to a beneficial relationship between the organisation and the publics. Most of the participants agreed to this. Participants believed that where an organisation has a well-structured system that values the input

of PR, management is bound to seek the advice of the PR department before taking any decision. Again, advice from the PR department is taken seriously and acted upon as an organisation cannot survive if it relies solely on promoting itself while neglecting concerns of its publics, as a participant noted:

The purpose of PR is to ensure that publics and management have a shared view, have a shared value creation arrangement, and have a shared quality relationship. And for that to happen it is useful for all the different publics to be on the same page in order to have a shared perspective on issues. And if it is that any of the public on the other side haven't or there is a third perspective, the responsibility of the PR person is to make that happen.

This assertion is in line with the views of Seitel (2007: 6). Some communication departments have developed core values that reflect the attitude that not just management, but the entire staff of the organisation should have towards the external publics. They believe that when the external publics see these being practiced, it will influence how they also relate to the organisation.

For most organisations when you do have your corporate values, the responsibility of the PR department is to communicate these values and encourage staff to embody and emulate them.....we try to give staff incentives to act in a certain way. Part of it is monetary but we also engage them and employ them to see the greater good that acting in this manner will have on the bank, so it will improve the bottom-line which in turn will also benefit the individual employee.

Elaborating on this issue, another participant noted that the duty of management is to behave ethically and also enhance the image of the organisation: "so if you are management and you are acting contrary, PR is supposed to bring you in line that, this is where we are supposed to be and we will draw your attention that where you are going will create an image problem."

Some of the participants were quick to acknowledge that changing management behaviour is not that easy. For participants, it is almost always difficult, especially in situations where management does not see the value of PR. In some cases, management is also looking at the budget as this participant said:

If you go out and do research and find out that the company doesn't have a good image, the public doesn't have a good perception of you, generally insurance people are not the best friends of people. It is for us to manage the one that is coming from management and that one is not easy because usually, they are looking at the purse, the bottom-line. If it is expensive, image building is not tangible, and so if I have to spend so much to build a certain image, that is where you have problem.

Another participant suggested that the structure of the organisation, especially the place of PR in the organisation, will determine a practitioner's ability to change management behaviour.

In some organisations, the PR is part of management and so he/she has that kind of authority to be able to advise management. But where it is not, then of course there are certain things discussed at the management level which the PR is not part of. In this case how can you change the attitude of management. But when it comes to the public that can be done.

Bowen et al (2012: 42) acknowledge this challenge when they suggest that the structure of an organisation tends to have an impact on communication due to the reporting structure. Commenting on the challenges of changing management behaviour, a participant noted that although that is the ideal situation, from their experience it is not always the case.

We are largely successful sometimes in changing the behaviour of customers, sometimes even part of the internal publics but when the board believes that this is the right way to go, it means they are set in their ways and nothing you do can change it. So, on paper that should be it but in practice it is not the case.

One participant called it "just theory" to emphasise the point that such things are idealistic but not the reality in organisations as management often appears to be steeped in its ways. The challenges associated with changing the behaviour of management has been associated with the value the dominant coalition places on PR. A participant in the insurance industry however believes that developing a mutually

beneficial relationship between management and publics has more to do with cultural settings within the organisation than actual change.

As an organisation, you need to make sure that you build a culture that is acceptable to your publics, internally and externally. External stakeholders want to see that what the organisation is doing meets their expectations while internal publics want to feel valued. When each other's needs are met, there is a mutual satisfaction.

This comment is supported by two other participants in the banking sector: “honestly, I see it in the other direction. In terms of management, I don't think it has a lot of effect. It looks more at the external than internal. For management I see them being affected by the culture of the organisation more than PR. Therefore, I look at it from the client perspective,” and “I don't think the purpose of PR is to change attitude. I think PR is to engender mutual respect and mutual coordination between organisations and publics. You can't change the attitude of managers, but managers can respect their stakeholders and ensure that they do right in whatever they do.” Participants reiterated earlier examples they cited in the interview to show that changing management attitude can be very difficult, if not impossible. Different management teams have different attitudes to the efforts of PR departments and this is reflected in their treatment of advice given to them. Interestingly, some of the participants acknowledged that on many occasions where management failed to heed their counsel, it has ended up affecting the organisation. When this happens, it sometimes softens management's approach to PR.

Role of PR in conflict management: Being part of the strategic management process puts PR practitioners in a position where they can identify potential problems or conflict situations and resolve them. Plowman (2005: 132) asserts that managing conflict ensures that practitioners are able to reduce future cost associated with such conflicts. PR practitioners are regarded as having the skills and expertise in assisting the management team to avoid and resolve issues (Broom & Sha, 2012: 34). Grunig et al (2002: 11) also acknowledge that it is the responsibility of PR practitioners to manage conflict or potential conflicts with key publics, especially at the programme level. Participants acknowledged that conflict management is a key responsibility. This is

because they are seen as the expert in the area of communication management.

Managing conflict is dependent on one's ability to communicate the issues effectively and PR practitioners are regarded as experts in this regard. A participant in a savings and loans company pointed out that "we are the first point of contact when there is a conflict." Other comments by participants include the following:

Because we have an interface responsibility, that becomes one of our key areas of operation and also to the extent that anything that detracts away from the shared values and the quality relationship, it is the duty of the PR department,

It is key because some of the complaints come to us first and when that happens we need to investigate the matter and then let management know this is what is happening. If it can be rectified immediately they do so. If they don't have plans to do so almost immediately then that is where we escalate the matter for management policy to be developed along those lines. We are therefore in the thick of it. In trying to ensure that management is aware about customers' feelings and for them to work at it to make the customer happy again,

And

Our key role is to provide a certain level of information to assure and secondly to assuage the sentiments of people.

One participant indicated how, as part of strategies (as noted earlier) to deal with conflict situations, they sometimes get the bank's manager to personally call the aggrieved client and speak to him/her. This participant believes that this strategy has proven effective on several occasions in resolving issues. Noticeably, conflict management situations are mostly handled from the external perspective. Participants acknowledged that they are mostly not involved with internal conflict management. Internal conflict is handled by human resources and administration, sometimes with the input of PR. The focus of conflict management is to ensure that customers are happy and remain with the organisation and so all effort is spent on the external public while the HR deals with internal publics. The excellence theory acknowledges that for

PR to resolve issues effectively, it must be part of strategic management. When this is done, PR can then play a more proactive role of anticipating and reducing as well as resolving emerging conflicts (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Grunig & Repper, 1992). Grunig et al (2002: 11) conclude that negotiating and mediating of conflict between management and strategic publics is a fulfilment of the managerial role of PR. This fact further points to the need for PR to be part of the strategic decision-making body.

5.3.3 Research objective: *Analyse the PR roles (activities) Ghanaian PR practitioners in the financial services sector are engaged in.*

This section will discuss the various activities that PR practitioners engage in. Two dominant roles have been discussed as reflecting the work of PR practitioners. The technician and the manager roles have been discussed severally in literature. The discussion will show whether the practice of PR in the financial services sector is influenced by both the technician and managerial roles or otherwise. In excellent organisations, the PR manager plays both the technician role and manager role. However, this is not the case in less excellent organisation. When the PR manager is a technician, the PR does not have the authority to function strategically (Grunig & Grunig, 2008: 336). The analysis will begin with a discussion on the technician role.

5.3.3.1 Technician role

Organisation of media relations activities: Media relations is one of the key activities that PR practitioners perform. Media relations activities allow practitioners to further project the activities of the organisation positively through the media. However, it is more than gaining positive publicity for the organisation. It is also about recognising the media as a key stakeholder in the PR process. Literature suggests that media relations is a key component of an organisation's PR programme as it serves as a window through which the organisation is exposed to the publics (Smith, 2008: 93). Results of the interviews show that communication managers within the financial services sector recognise the role that the media plays in the success of their programmes. Almost every participant has a media contact list that it uses. The key media houses and media personnel are targeted and engaged.

Most of the participants have a media plan that they implement using various tools. For instance, a participant had this to say about media relations:

we have a media relationship management and a strategy that underscores that relationship. It is medium to long-term. We treat the media as a public and we ensure that the same principles that apply to our relationship and define our relationship with all our important publics are in application in our dealing with the media. Having them at programmes is more of an outcome rather than the key layer of our relationship.

Media relations strategies are developed based on spread, reach, influence, and popularity among others. Participants do not only engage them when there is a press release to be issued or they need them to cover their programmes:

We are regularly in touch with them just to engage them and make sure everything is fine. They understand what we are doing and then when we have programmes they are invited. We give them overview of what our schedule or planning is so they can fit it into their schedule, so they can have key features. We look to them to come to us for opportunities where we can capitalise on a particular supplement that they are doing for perhaps a holiday or a particular opportunity for a column or to do a special series.

Media relations activities include sponsorship programmes for media practitioners, organising workshops/seminars for senior journalists, visitations to media houses, and giving out souvenirs at the end of the year. Media relations is one of the technical roles PR practitioners play and is usually associated with writing and distributing of press releases, organising press conferences, and keeping updated media lists. Johnston (2007: 3) however, suggests that media relations is much more than compiling, writing, and distributing information to the media. Johnston argues that the focus of media relations should be on the “why” and not just about the “what” to do to achieve business goals. Evidence from the interviews show this is the case as participants go beyond the normal press releases or invitations to cover events and engage the media as a partner.

One key media relations activity that is popular among practitioners in Ghana is what is referred to as ‘press soirees.’ Most of the participants admitted that at least once a

year they organise a press soiree for senior editors where they have informal discussions. This is one way of getting the journalists closer to the organisation. A participant said:

Press soirees are part of what we do but they are about the low tiers of the relationship. We do press soirees on significant occasions, particularly at the end of the year, and the reason is to create the space for very informal but probing and intrusive discussion, which is typically off the record.

Another participant concurred by indicating: "We normally do a media soiree to engage senior journalists on issues affecting the industry or bank. These are mostly off record events." This is not a practice among all participants though as some also realise that the media houses are also in competition and so prefer to meet them one-on-one. The purpose of media relations is not just to ensure that the organisation is also in the media for the right reasons, as a participant stated: "Their job is also to try and block negative information about the brand and any time they pick any negative information, they quickly call you and give you the information." Another articulated that,

we are able to speak freely and also have the freedom to clarify information before it goes out. It is not just that this thing has gone out and it is inaccurate or not factual. Anything relating to the company is crosschecked with us and if for some reason it is not cross checked we draw their attention.

The concept of the press soiree confirms the findings of Sriramesh et al (1999: 278) that practitioners tend to use interpersonal interaction to develop personal influence with key stakeholders such as the media by using 'hospitality relations' to get them closer to the organisation in order to solicit favours from them later.

Media relations plays a very crucial role in the lives of participants and they have specific plans for engaging media relations activities. The purpose is to encourage positive coverage and minimise negative coverage. The results confirm the comments of Smith (2014: 82) that media relations go beyond the normal publicity efforts to develop a mutual relationship between the media and the organisation. There is a symbiotic relationship as they rely on each other. For instance, whereas organisations rely on the media to assist them in communicating with their publics, the media also relies on organisations to provide relevant newsworthy information for their audiences.

Organising of special events: One of the key areas of PR is the organisation of special events. Special events are staged activities organised as a means of gaining attention and acceptance among key publics. Activities are designed to engage the publics and listen to them (Wilcox et al 2015: 42). Smith (2017: 127) points out that special events are legitimate means of engaging the publics and interacting with them and warns against using these purely as a publicity stunt. Therefore, in order to distinguish a special event from a publicity stunt, a practitioner must be able to answer the question “even if the news media don’t report this activity, would it still be worthwhile?” (Smith, 2017: 266).

Participants engage in a series of special events as part of their activities. These activities range from breakfast fora, customer engagements, special dinner meetings with key clients, organising special training for some key publics, health walks, promotional activities, customer cocktails, client appreciation events, among others. A participant noted: “we do work on a lot of events including product launches, anniversary activities, customer service initiatives as well as corporate banking initiatives.” The research clearly shows that organising of special activities is the domain of PR practitioners. What is also significant is that not all of these activities involve media coverage.

Production of audio-visual and communication materials: Literature states that PR practitioners are responsible for writing and producing general communication materials, including audio-visual materials, press releases, feature stories, brochures, and annual reports to meet organisational information needs (Bowen et al 2012: 22; Broom & Sha, 2012: 34). This was confirmed by participants who acknowledged that production of all audio-visual and communication materials was part of their core activities. From documentaries to newsletters, brochures and commercials, participants develop the content of the materials. Actual production is however outsourced to a production agency. Participants work hand in hand with agencies to ensure production meets requirements.

Projection of organisation’s activities: Participants indicated that they use various techniques in projecting the activities of the organisation to the publics. Writing of articles for publication is part of what participants do. “We also use CSR activities as

well by making donations to institutions and write stories on these donations.” The use of CSR to project the organisation is especially common within PR departments, as the interviews revealed. One of the participants indicated that his department uses four basic channels in projecting the activities of his organisation:

One of the channels is the end media, that is, all the publicity we get from traditional media, from news media. Why the end media is useful is that the strength of that channel dwells on the strength that it is an expert view, when it comes from the media it comes from the journalist. We also have our own channels that we use. We also have the owned media and the shared media. The shared media would be more in the public space where we get people to talk about some of our things and then the final piece is the media that we would buy sometimes but that is the option we use least.

Not only does the department use traditional media and new media, it also uses internal media and sometimes purchases spots for advertising in some of the media houses. The use of social media has become popular for businesses and this was evident in the response of some participants. Surprisingly, many of the departments did not have social media presence although they did indicate they were in the process of getting on board. This confirms literature which identified the lack of presence by PR practitioners online even though they do recognise its importance. Other activities include press conferences, press interactions, sponsorships and partnerships with well-known institutions. From the results, it can be concluded that media relations/publicity activities are not the only means by which practitioners project the activities of their organisations.

5.3.3.2. Managerial role

Literature shows that for PR to be truly symmetrical and excellent, it must be recognised as a management function. PR must be part of the decision-making body in order to counsel management on the impact of their decisions or policies on the organisations. It must also report to the chief executive and not another department. This section of the analysis will look at whether PR practitioners in Ghana actually

perform the managerial role.

Involvement in strategic planning: Much has been written about the importance of the PR department in the strategic planning process of organisations (Mykkanen & Vos, 2015; Dozier, Grunig & Grunig., 2013; Steyn, 2007; Smith, 2017; Grunig & Grunig, 2000). Strategic planning occurs when the dominant coalition leads the management team in planning activities towards achieving the organisation's mission and long-term goals. In the view of Higgins (in Dozier et al 2013: 85) strategic management deals with the "process of managing the pursuit of the accomplishment of organisational mission coincident with managing the relationship of the organisation to its environment." Consequently, the relationship that an organisation has with its key publics is critical to the mission of the organisation. There is therefore a strong linkage between excellent PR and strategic planning (Dozier et al 2013: 85). Grunig et al (2002: 32) suggest that a failure on the part of an organisation's chief executive to recognise the linkage between communication and strategic planning can lead to the practitioner being prevented from the strategic planning process. This is acknowledged by Smith (2017: 351) who points out that PR is, most of the time, not viewed as strategic management but rather as a vehicle for production and distribution of messages. This means that where PR department is regarded more in terms of publicity purposes, it is not likely to be part of the decision-making process. For most organisations in the financial services sector, strategic planning occurs at the end of the year. Every department develops its strategy, and this is put together and discussed during strategic planning sessions. These sessions are mostly facilitated by top management who give out key indicators as to the direction the organisation will be moving in the following year. Strategies are developed based on the organisational objectives. Except for three participants, the participants indicated that the PR department is a part of the strategic planning process. Strategic plans are developed on a departmental basis and this is then discussed and approved or amended during the strategic sessions where all heads of department as well as senior executive members or dominant coalitions will be present. One participant made this known when she said: "we have a strategic committee in charge of developing strategies and every functional area is represented on that committee and together we all bring out the strategy in line with the mission and vision of the organisation." Another participant described the role his department plays in the strategic planning process:

The organisation expects us to show our stakeholder engagement plans and also show how we will ensure that the value pipeline between us and important publics is fluid and active. In addition, we will have a view of the general larger economic operating environment and important dynamics and how those could impact on numbers in terms of sensibility analysis and so we would impact on strategy at various levels.

One participant however noted that his outfit is not always involved in the strategic planning process: “Our involvement is mixed. Sometimes the strategy is brought from outside which we all have to follow.” The view from this participant confirms views of scholars such as Smith (2017) about the lack of involvement in strategic planning by some practitioners. Grunig et al (2002: 143,383) posit the need for practitioners to be ‘empowered’. Empowerment allows the PR department to be present and be part of the strategic planning and the decision-making process. A female participant also acknowledged that the overall strategy of the bank is developed by the chief executive, but each department is allowed to make inputs. In her case she makes input from a marketing and communication perspective. What is evident from the research is that participants are key members of the strategic planning process. Even for those who play a partial role in the strategic planning process, they still get to make an input based on their communication activities. The dominant coalition in organisations makes proactive decisions during the strategic planning process including “determining the organisation’s mission, assessing the external environment, matching the organisational profile with environmental opportunities, developing short-term goals, implementing programmes, and evaluating success or failure” (Dozier et al 2013: 85). In order to achieve these, the PR department can play an important role by being the “eyes and ears” of the organisation.

Involvement in the decision-making process: PR is regarded as excellent and effective when the department is situated among the roles or is part of the dominant coalition. Being part of senior management allows practitioners to help management scan the external environment and take appropriate proactive steps to respond to it (Dozier et al 2013: 85). In many of the organisations, the communication manager is usually not part of the executive body. Grunig et al (2002: 383) advocated a “full participation” for

practitioners before strategic decisions are made. When practitioners are part of the decision-making process, they are able to scan the environment in order to identify key publics that the organisation's decisions can potentially affect or who can affect the implementation of the organisation's decisions. Practitioners are then able to develop the appropriate strategies to address the issues and maintain relationship. In the financial services sector there are two levels of management. The first level consists of the executive management team which is usually made up of the CEO, Chief Finance Manager and other ranking officers (these differ depending on the organisational structure). The second level consists of departmental managers, and this is where PR is mostly found. Interestingly, participants are allowed to sit in executive management committee meetings "in attendance" to offer advice where necessary. They are not however active participants in the decision-making process. Participation in the decision-making process "depends on what is being discussed," as one participant puts it.

A participant in the insurance sector had a situation where he tended to sit in board meetings rather than meetings of the executive management team: "I don't sit in the executive management team, but I am part of the management meeting. I however report directly to the MD. There are times when decisions are critical, the board invites me to sit in the meetings because they always want the perspective of PR to come on board. So there have been several times when I have been asked to sit in the board meeting." These comments reflect available evidence that suggests that although today's practitioners report to the CEO they are nevertheless not seen as formal members of the top management making key contributions to strategic decisions (Caroll, 2013: 59). When this happens, PR can be more asymmetric than symmetric with practitioners aiming to convince publics of the organisation's position rather than engaging in strategic relationship with mutual benefits.

The lack of active involvement in the decision-making process, however, does not apply to everyone. One of the participants in a bank explained why he is part of the executive management, the highest decision-making body: "The merit of what we do as a department is known. Management knows the value we give to the organisation. It is quantifiable, consistent and acknowledged." Interestingly, two of the organisations reported a topsy-turvy approach regarding the placement of the department on the

organisational structure. “Sometimes the head of PR is at the very top whilst there are times when PR is made subservient to marketing,” and

In terms of our experience, it has been topsy-turvy. Sometimes you may be part of the executive management depending on who is at the helm of affairs. A particular MD may value PR while another may not. When this happens, we become ineffective. But if we have a CEO who values PR that is where we function properly and like I said sometimes they want to merge PR and marketing and when that happens PR is subsumed, and someone will come and say as for me I want my PR out of marketing.

The participants attribute this to the value that management attributes to PR and politicking. Concerning placement of PR under marketing, Grunig (2002: 14) argued for the integration of excellent communication functions through a top communication manager with a PR background rather being integrated with either marketing or human resources. The debate over whether marketing and PR are separate functions or not has been ongoing for decades. Most marketing books attempt to place PR under marketing (Papasolomou, Thrassou, Vrontis & Sabova, 2014: 7). Significantly, most marketing professionals and academicians have demonstrated a lack of recognition for the expansive literature related specifically to PR (Grunig, 1992) and have often treated PR as a subset of marketing (Kitchen & Moss, 1995: 108). PR is therefore subsumed under the more dominant marketing function and treated as a product of publicity. The subordination of PR under marketing may account for the attitude of management towards PR. PR therefore is made a tactical support to marketing with the PR manager reporting to the marketing manager instead of the CEO. PR scholars (Broom & Sha, 2012; White, 1991; Ehling, White & Grunig, 1992) contend that PR should be viewed as a separate function directed towards resolving key issues that are beyond the domain of marketing. Grunig and Grunig (1991: 257) argue that subordination of PR under marketing will result in more one-way communication than two-way and the result of PR activities will not be the same if such activities are based on marketing concepts. Grunig and Grunig (2013: 53) therefore point to the need to separate PR from other functions, especially marketing, to enable the discipline provide its unique contribution.

Regardless of their role in the decision-making process, almost all the participants

acknowledged that they reported directly to the CEO. For PR to function in an excellent way, the department must report to the head or someone who reports to the head. The results of the research demonstrate this, as a participant noted: “About a year ago I was actually reporting to the chief marketing officer who also reported to the CEO but now I report directly to the CEO.” Three of the participants said they reported “indirectly” to their chief executives:

because my immediate boss reports directly to the chief executive. But if he is not there, I can go straight to the CEO. Sometimes my immediate boss asks me to deal directly with the chief executive even when he is around. I can therefore go to my chief executive directly. My immediate boss is the head of business, which is under the deputy CEO.

The second participant also stated:

I usually meet the MD on one on one issues, but I am not part of the decision-making body. But my head of department may represent and come back with decisions.

The third participant also made it known that since his department was “under marketing”, he usually reported to the head of marketing. Nevertheless, he stated he sometimes spoke to the overall head of the organisation on relevant issues. The Excellence theory notes that the roles of practitioners are conceptually and empirically linked to their participation in the decision-making process. Dozier (1992: 342) postulates that “if practitioners are to help organisations adapt to changes in the environment, they must participate in the management decision-making process, not simply implement decisions made by others.”

Advising management on the impact of their behaviour: Literature defines symmetrical PR as a two-way dialogue whereby the views of key publics are considered in the decision-making process of management. In the symmetrical PR, influencing the behaviour of management is just as important as influencing the behaviour of publics. Grunig and Grunig (2013: 74) therefore contend that the purpose of PR is to make input into organisational decisions so that organisations “behave in ways that publics are willing to support rather than in ways that publics oppose with their own behaviours.” Most participants were of the view that advising management on the impact of their behaviour on key publics was their responsibility. Participants were also

quick to acknowledge that it does not work all the time and sometimes top management does not heed to counsel until their predictions come true. “There have been several instances where we would have very difficult conversations and try and influence management behaviour. We are successful a lot of the times. The few times we haven’t been successful in history points out that we were right, which further increases our leverage and so we do that actively and aggressively,” noted a participant. Another participant expressed her frustration with executive management in the following way:

Sometimes when they take a decision and it backfires, they then come to us to go and do firefighting for them. But, where we have the opportunity we always say this is likely to happen. The sad part of it is that when the problem occurs, we are the ones they blame. I believe they will realise the importance of PR in the management process and at the executive table. A colleague of mine is on the executive management so it is easy for him but for some of us it is not that easy because we have issues with the executive management as we are not part of it. They do not understand the value of PR to the organisational process. If you are not at the executive table and certain decision are taken that tie your hands it becomes very difficult for you to function. Some of them know the role of PR but others believe they can function without us until they run into problems and then they come running back to us.

Participants said there was a clear difference between explaining things to top management and them accepting it, as reflected in the words of one participant:

Sometimes people have decided, and attitudes are hard to change, and that is why it is even more important that the PR role is part of the executive body so that if you recommend and they don't accept at least you are also there and you can influence it in various other ways.

Participants argued that it was essential to let top management understand that whatever they do or do not do can have a positive or negative outcome for the organisation: “So long as management will take decisions that will affect everyone

around them, it is important that you as the practitioner, who represent the interest of both parties, point out the implications of such decisions.” Some participants, as part of this process, organise training programmes for executive management. The comments validate findings from literature that PR will suffer if it is not valued by management. What the findings show is that from the view of management, PR should be practiced in an asymmetric way where the emphasis is on changing the behaviour of publics more than management.

PR as a warning system: One of the definitions of PR describes the discipline as “serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends” (Johnston, 2016: 17). This means that practitioners are proactive in their approach by constantly scanning the environment to identify issues that might potentially affect the reputation of the organisation and to create a management plan for the future. Toth (2001: 246) also suggests that PR practitioners serve as early warning systems for social change when they advise management about policy decisions that affect society. They contribute to this social change through the development of strategies that engage affected publics. Participants generally concurred that their outfits warn management of issues with the potential to become a crisis. PR practitioners scan and monitor the environment to identify not only opportunities but issues likely to lead to a crisis. Practitioners then advise management on dealing with such issues. Issues can also develop from decisions or policies management may want to adopt. The recent development in the financial services sector in Ghana, as enumerated earlier, has made this role even more important. A participant recounted an experience involving a savings and loans company with a similar name to his organisation:

Sometimes you can see the danger coming and inform management before they escalate. I remember recently when these microfinance institutions were defrauding others, there was another organisation with a similar name to ours that closed and people started panicking. I got to know two days before anyone else and so we prepared our mind and information got out before it became an issue. Based on that, we advised management what it is they needed to do. Again, last year there was a fraud in one of our branches and the staff was sacked. We had bad press. One gentleman came here and unfortunately, I wasn't here so he went

straight to the CEO. He didn't like the way the CEO interacted with him, so he went and wrote a nasty thing about the organisation. Initially management wanted us to write something to tell the public that this is not true, but I advised them against it. We later did a press release detailing our performance and how we are supporting our clients.

Another participant also explained how the collapse of two banks (described earlier) just a few weeks earlier had affected his organisation. The organisation used to be a microfinance organisation that had transformed into a full bank. Coincidentally, the two banks that collapsed also used to be microfinance companies before they became banks. It became an issue as there were suspicions they were next:

The recent collapse of the two banks has affected us so much, if not handled well it can turn into a crisis for us. It is an issue for us to address because people are getting scared and we are being informed that people doubt whether we are well capitalised. We warn management about such things. I have had feedback from people. A PR of a certain company called me and said this is something someone is saying against my institution and the person is about to fire a blog against the organisation and I should find out how I can deal with that before it becomes a crisis. So at this level we have the issue of dealing with how to assure people. We are trying our best to assure that this organisation is not what people are putting out there.

Grunig et al (2002: 443) say that practitioners serve as an early warning system when they become the 'eyes and ears' of the organisation. They become a key part of the environmental scanning process and use their knowledge and skills to bring the voices of the publics to bear in strategic decision-making. Participants again reiterated that although serving as an early warning system to management was their duty, management did not always listen to them. This is reflected in the following comments: "Sometimes I advise them, but it is not taken until it comes back to hurt them before they heed my warning," and "sometimes when management want to push an agenda, they will care less about the implications of what they will do. But if you are minded by the rules of corporate

governance, whatever the PR tells you, you will know it has serious implications, so you will listen.” Notwithstanding these minor challenges participants generally notified management of potential issues likely to turn into a crisis and worked with management to resolve such issues.

Development and implementation of communication strategy: Almost every book on PR acknowledges the value of PR’s strategic contribution to organisational business goals. It does this through the development of communication or PR strategies. Various formulas such as John Martson’s RACE formula - Research, Action, Communication and Evaluation - as well as Jerry Hendrix’s ROPE - Research, Objectives, Programme and Evaluation - have been widely used to develop strategic plans to aid the achievement of the overall organisational objectives. The strategic planning concept though was first muted by Scott Cutlip and Allen Center in their 1952 classic *Effective Public Relations* - find the facts, establish a policy and/or plan a programme, communicate the story, and get feedback from internal and external publics to help determine modification or future planning (Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg, 2010: 218). PR practitioners are required to develop and implement communication strategies to enhance the reputation of the organisation. In this regard all the participants acknowledged that they were responsible for the development of communication strategies. Participants felt that it was their responsibility and allowing outside agencies to do it would undermine their value. A participant postulated that most PR agencies “are not communications people. They are people who have done a bit of marketing and producing collaterals and they think they are doing communication.” Another participant was of the view that agencies usually did not have a full grasp of the situation and so ended up not doing good work. However, implementation of strategies is mostly done by outside agencies. Participants indicated that they did not have the capacity to implement strategies due to the small personnel they had. However, they did not leave everything up to agencies. They worked hand in hand with the agencies to ensure that implementation was successful. The results confirm what literature says about the role of PR in the strategic planning process. Coombs & Heath (2006: 137) affirm this by noting that PR develops problem-solving strategies to help improve the organisation as a whole and by enhancing their own effectiveness in the

process.

Involvement in other key roles: Participants did indicate that their department was responsible for several activities including community relations/corporate social responsibility, events management, investor relations, issues management, and internal communication. Indeed, for CSR, participants indicated that it was under their domain hence every action or activity that has to do with CSR or community relations was initiated by them. Participants strongly believe that CSR activities gave them legitimacy in the eyes of the public. The public sees them as not only there to make money but also to give back to society, as one participant puts it: “CSR helps win goodwill more than just publishing things about your company.” The expanded role of PR practice means PR practitioners are now at the forefront of an organisation’s CSR activities. This is especially so because of the widespread negative publicity that has confronted organisations and businesses in the last decade. Organisations are now making every effort to regain public trust and credibility hence the idea of CSR is now high on the agenda of corporate executives with the PR department being charged with enhancing the reputation and citizenship of the organisations (Wilcox et al 2015: 475). In the financial services sector especially, PR is at the forefront of building trust and credibility due to the current mistrust of the sector. Research shows that about 42 percent of an organisation’s reputation is based on perceived corporate citizenship, sound governance, and quality as a workplace (Wilcox et al 2015: 475).

Concerning internal communication, most participants said it was under their domain although they worked hand in hand with HR and administration. For participants, their work did not involve only external publics as they believed that “your first customers are your internal staff.” Some of the participants said they usually organised special events that allowed staff to express themselves. All internal communication activities are managed by the department. Internal engagement is a critical component of the communication department. As indicated though, the communication department does not work in isolation but involves HR and administration due to the employee relations aspect. Literature suggests that employee communication is one of the most frequent sources of conflict between the HR and administration department and the PR department.

While the HR personnel believe that they are responsible for information flow within organisations, PR departments believe that effective communication with external publics cannot be successful without effective employee relations (Wilcox et al 2015: 132).

Three main areas have been identified as contributing to the confusion: 1) when developing employee relations plans during layoffs, crises, reorganisation, mergers, and acquisitions; 2) when planning and implementing community relations efforts involve employee participation; and 3) when programmes directed to employees require PR thinking and skills more than those from the HR perspective and skills set (Broom & Sha, 2012: 59). The PR department is expected to collaborate with other functions such as HR due to the realisation that internal relationships ultimately extend to external relationships.

The communication departments of the institutions interviewed also engaged in other activities including exhibitions, sponsorships, representing the organisation, organising internal events for staff, among others.

Participants as advocates for key publics and role in initiating dialogue with special publics: Literature suggests that PR practitioners are advocates and consensus builders for and on behalf of their organisations. In this role, practitioners work to develop mutuality, build understanding among parties of opposing sides, mediate, and serve as liaisons. PR is, therefore not one dimensional as practitioners seek the interest of both the organisation and the publics (Daugherty, 2001: 391).

Participants were asked to indicate their role in serving as advocates for key publics. Results suggest that while some play a strong role, others do play a partial role. One of the participants argued that because practitioners serve as an interface, it was their job to “speak very persuasively the view of the key publics so that there is mutual understanding, there is an appreciation and there are the right behaviours to reflect that appreciation.” The comment of another participant appears to support this assertion: “we cannot always be on the side of management, sometimes you have to be on the good side of the client in order to maintain good balance.” Heath and Coombs (2006: 30) argue that practitioners

become advocates for the organisation's clients when they listen to the needs and concerns of publics who utilise the services of the organisation. By this they build relationships that are mutually beneficial. For most of the participants however, they did not play much of a role as far as serving as advocates for key publics is concerned. In the words of a participant: "here we are very conservative, so we cannot be touting the issues of external publics." Another participant also intimated: "our responsibility as a department is to the bank. We want to make sure that the bank's story is effectively communicated to the benefit of the bank." To this effect the idea of advocacy for key publics is not pursued that much. This assertion also confirms the view that although the purpose of PR is to build consensus through mutual relationship building, ultimately, PR practitioners are "hired guns whose job it is to serve their employers" (Spicer, 2013: 181).

Concerning initiating dialogue with special publics, most participants were of the view that they did not play key roles. Indeed, most of the organisations have committees that engage special stakeholders. The PR department is usually a part of the committee because "we are seen as the department with the expertise to bring certain things to bear on deliberations," as one participant puts it. In most situations, dialogues are initiated by the chief executive or someone of the dominant coalition but not the PR department. A few departments are nevertheless strongly involved in the dialogue and negotiation process. For instance, a participant was of the view that they constantly initiated dialogue with some key stakeholders whose activities could have a negative effect on the organisation. They were able to bring management and these key publics together to engage each other in a way that would ensure mutual benefits. Ideally, organisations would like to remain autonomous from regulators and avoid pressure from activist groups. This allows them to operate with a more closed system or asymmetric approach. However, this is not possible as organisations are interdependent on stakeholders to ensure survival. There is therefore a strong linkage between autonomy, interdependence, and relationships. As much as relationships limit the organisations' autonomy, it is essential for organisations to interact and cooperate with groups likely to limit their autonomy. By adapting, collaborating, and interacting with stakeholders, organisations ultimately

increase their autonomy. Organisations that voluntarily establish relationship with key publics gain more autonomy as they are not coerced into such relationships. Therefore, the purpose of PR is to build relationships and manage interdependence to maximise the autonomy of organisations. PR contributes to organisational effectiveness by building good relationships with both internal and external publics (Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, 1992: 67-69).

5.3.4. Concluding questions

As part of the interview, participants were asked questions relating to the PR industry in Ghana in general. Questions ranged from the characteristics of the practice on this side of the world as compared to the developed countries as well as political and cultural factors that impacted on the practice, if any.

The PR industry in Ghana: A review of the PR landscape in Ghana earlier indicated a paucity of information about the current state of PR in Ghana. The little available information suggests that PR has witnessed tremendous growth due to several variables including the return to multi-party democracy, liberalisation of the media landscape, and media plurality. Kudzodzi (2017) describes it as a movement “from errand boy to professional practitioner.” Earlier literature (Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2008, 2009) suggests that there is increased professionalism and acknowledgement about the value of PR although the pace of growth was slow. Participants were asked if they thought there was a difference in the way PR was practiced in Ghana compared to developed countries. Generally, all the participants were in agreement. Participants were of the view that the practice in advanced countries such as the USA and UK was much more professional than in Ghana. The issue of professionalism was emphasised by practitioners to show the gulf between what is practiced outside and what pertains to Ghana. “Over here, anyone who can talk or speak good English thinks he is a practitioner and you will find some organisations recruiting such people,” said one participant. A participant attributed this to a lack of proper regulation: “Our problem is regulation. Anyone does anything and they call it PR. There is no regulation and that is a key challenge.” In the area of strategic value, some participants believed that PR is not given the proper recognition in Ghana as it is in other countries.

One participant was of the view that “PR, for most organisations, is seen as publicity rather than a strategic tool to move organisations forward.” Another participant tended to agree by pointing out that “unfortunately, industry does not recognise our role. PR is often pushed to the backburner until there is a problem. But in advanced countries, PR is mostly placed at the highest level and they excel.” Some of the participants partly blamed the national association, IPR, Ghana, for the perceived lack of recognition as reflected in the following statements: “I believe PR bodies enhance the way the practice is done, and I believe that is lacking with IPR. The standards for practice are not clear and no one knows what is acceptable or not,” and “I think it is also because the PR association in itself has not done a good job in positioning PR as a strategic tool, so there is still a lot that needs to be done.”

National associations are believed to play a critical role in the professionalisation of disciplines including PR. They create normative values, set standards for practice, and present a common ground for practitioners and organisations that use their services to operate effectively (Yang & Taylor, 2014: 509). From the view point of some of the practitioners though, the national association is not doing much to ensure professionalism. These sentiments agree with literature that suggests that PR, especially in developing countries, often suffers from a lack of recognition by management, professionalism, and ethical situations. Joseph (2017) cited some of the challenges confronting PR practice in Africa including, a poor understanding of what the profession really is about, a lack of specialisation in PR, lack of ethics among professionals, and negative cultural habits, attitudes, and taboos which prevent practitioners from developing effective campaigns. Although there are many communication schools springing up at many universities, many people occupying the position are mainly from marketing, journalism, or other disciplines. Despite these challenges, evidence suggests that the gap between PR practice in Africa, and Ghana in particular, and the rest of the developed systems is reducing. As much as PR in Africa is daunting, progress has been made. The global environment and the ability of practitioners to draw on global influence make the prospect of PR on the continent very promising (Skinner, 2013: 15).

Cultural and political factors: One of the questions that the research sought to find answers to was whether PR practice in Ghana was influenced, in part, by cultural and political factors. Literature reviewed showed that culture, for instance, plays a significant role in how PR is practiced, especially in developing countries like Africa where the lives of the people are shaped by their cultural values. Hart (2013: 240) posits that cultural awareness is essential to the design and interpretation of a message, whether it is press release or a PR campaign. Sriramesh (2009: 53), one of the well-known PR authors who has written extensively on this subject, asserts that culture influences communication and is influenced by it.

Since PR is fundamentally a communication activity, it can be linked to culture, a view shared by Valentini (2007: 121). The issue of cultural factors did not generate a definite response from some of the participants. One thing participants were definite on is that consensus building was critical when dealing with clients and also communities. Participants believed in consultation to build consensus before embarking on certain campaigns.

In UK for instance, when you are setting up a business, all you need is your licence. But in Ghana that will not happen. If you want to set up a branch, you can have your permit alright, but you will still need to get the approval of the chief/community leaders before you can do anything, noted one participant.

The chiefs and opinion leaders are regarded as the ones who keep the peace hence if an organisation is to operate peacefully within a community, all of them must be brought on board as they have influence over their subordinate. These opinion leaders are also influential in driving customers to the organisation. Commenting on this, another participant also said: "I believe our cultural background strongly influences how we do business and we are proud of it because that is who we are. This is our environment and we should practice it according to the shape and lay of our land." One participant cited an example to emphasise the role culture plays in PR.

Some time ago we wanted to introduce a new product. We had gone through all the phases of product development and this was a product mainly targeted at one of the main religious communities in Ghana. I felt, when it came to me for approval that it was lacking in a lot of respects. We could do all of that, but it won't sell. We needed to engage the constituents to get their buy-in into the product before the introduction. So, we arranged a series of activities with different levels of the community members. Although it is a savings product, this religion shuns something like interests on loans, so we did it as a savings towards their annual religious travels. The PR angle was to go down and engage the people and find out even if there will be the need to introduce that product. It was important to get them to understand that this is good for you, so we now had to go and talk to them using different approaches - sponsorship, one-on-one meetings, paying courtesy calls etc. On the day of the launch there was a huge buy-in. Community members made positive comments and called on others to patronise the product and we had a very good one.

Another participant also gave an example to buttress his argument:

If I am opening a branch in Tamale I cannot go to Tamale without going to the chief's palace to inform him that I am coming to set up a branch. Before the branch is opened the chief and his entourage as well as other opinion leaders must all be invited. Again, there is no way you can go to Kumasi and not go to the Asantehene's palace. When the Asantehene has an issue, we need to go and support. That is the relationship and that is the way to establish a relationship between Asanteman and the organisation.

The point participants made is that culture is key in business and “anyone who eliminates the influence of culture will end up shooting himself in the foot,” as one participant put it. To participants, culture is key to one’s livelihood and therefore one needs to look at the cultural setting and amend and change certain things that do not

suit the cultural setting in which one finds oneself operating. “In UK, it is a straightjacket thing, but in Ghana you don’t just get up and do things that way. You won’t succeed,” said a female participant from an insurance company. What is clear is that social interaction is key to relationship building. The idea of bonding with the people in the community and seeing them as part of the organisation as a whole, is very critical for the success of the organisation. Participants recognise the need for a collectivist approach that builds consensus, not an individualistic approach if an organisation is to succeed within the Ghanaian environment. The views of participants agree with the belief that effective PR is premised on communication and collaboration (Verčič, Grunig & Grunig, 1996: 31). The result clearly links with the concept of *ubuntu*, as explained in literature. It also confirms results of other research on the continent (Mersham et al 2011; Sriramesh & Vercic, 2009; Ming-Yi & Baah-Boakye, 2007; Van Heerden, 2004) which show that cultural influence is pervasive in PR and practitioners cannot de-link it from their activities.

On the *political perspective*, participants also agreed that political environment has some influence on PR practice but not in the same way as cultural factors. Political factors were seen more in terms of government using PR within the various agencies as a propaganda tool to further its own agenda. Participants were of the view that political factors tend to affect the professionalism of practitioners within the public sector as they are forced to compromise their values and follow the ways of the sitting government. What they also agreed on was that the political transition from a military rule to democratic rule has greatly influenced the growth of the practice. As successive governments put in measures to ensure political stability and peace within the country, it is allowing for a boom in the economic sector and opening the country for investors. The influx of investors and multinational organisations is also opening more opportunities for practitioners to be recognised as such organisations come from countries where PR is held in high value. Participants believe that this is helping the practice to grow.

According to one participant, management of most multinational organisations believe in the value of PR because such organisations move by global standards even though they operate in a local environment. Much has been written about how political systems influence how PR is practiced in a country. Evidence (Molleda, 2008; Braun,

2007; Molleda & Moreno, 2006; Sriramesh & White, 1992) show the influence of political and socioeconomic systems on the practice of PR. Sriramesh and Verčič (2001: 105) also identified five environmental variables that influenced the practice of PR: political ideology, economic system, level of activism, culture, and culture and media. The findings of the research agree with the now widely accepted view that the economy, location, and history of a country impact greatly on the practice of PR, and culture is also inextricably linked with how PR is practiced (Valentini, 2014: 121).

Suggestion for improvement of PR industry in Ghana: Participants acknowledged the need for more professionalism in the system to enhance the growth of the industry. This, they suggest, can be achieved through constant professional training by the parent association, IPR, Ghana. Participants were of the view that the PR industry is changing daily and there was the need for practitioners to be abreast with current trends in order to remain relevant. Training must not be limited to only those in the industry but to top management as well in order for them to understand the value of PR to the organisation. “We can organise conferences that will change perspectives for both CEOs and practitioners. You can have a very good practitioner but if the CEO is not on the same page, your work is as good as zero,” said a participant in an insurance company. These suggestions confirm evidence adduced that for PR to grow, it must be valued by management. The understanding of management is critical for strategic PR practice. Participants asserted that consistent upgrading by professionals would make them relevant to their organisation. Black (2014) asserts the need for the practitioner to constantly develop his/her personal qualities and professional/business skills in order to remain relevant. Apart from training, some also called for a bill to regulate the practice as it is the practice in other disciplines. This way people who are not professionals cannot carry themselves as PR practitioners. According to one female participant, regulation of the industry must not be from just IPR but also practitioners themselves: “Practitioners must take pride in their profession and make sure they work to ensure that people who are not qualified don’t find their way into the profession.” In relation to that, two participants also emphasised the need to enhance the IPR code of ethics. Ensuring that the code of ethics is enforced in the practice will sustain the growth of the practice.

The issue of journalists being recruited for PR work was also mentioned by practitioners as contributing to the problems within the profession. Most participants acknowledged that it was important for organisations to hire people who have actual PR background and not people who are purely journalists.

One participant in particular chose to focus on the need to make measurement and evaluation a core part of PR work to constantly show value: “We need to make measurement the way we live; remembering that we are doing this job to add value to our organisation and to other stakeholders. The moment we start destroying value nobody will take us seriously.”

5.4. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PR PRACTICE IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

The first aspect of this chapter discussed the findings of the interviews in relation to literature. The study revealed significant findings as to how PR functions within the financial services sector. These findings will guide the framework. In developing the framework, this research will be guided by an understanding of the theoretical statements reviewed in chapter 2.

5.4.1. Theoretical statement for the proposed framework

In relation to the research objective of investigating the conceptualisation and practice of PR by means of literature review and based on the findings from the study, the development of the framework will be based on the theoretical statements realised from literature. These theories outline how PR should be practiced in order to establish a mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and its key stakeholders. The interviews conducted gave further insight into how these theoretical statements are applied within the financial services sector in Ghana. Before the outline of the proposed framework is developed, this section will discuss the theoretical statements as seen in the literature review.

As outlined in chapter 2, the theoretical statements consist of the Systems Theory, the Relationship Management Theory and the Excellence Theory.

The *Systems Theory* argues that organisations are systems made up of interrelated and interdependent subsystems. Organisations are perceived as having a relationship

with their environment. Actions of the organisation therefore benefit both the organisation and the environment in which it operates. PR practitioners serve as a boundary spanner in this system where they facilitate an open and transparent relationship between the organisation and its publics. The purpose of PR is to scan and monitor the environment, detect issues of relevance to the organisation, and develop the appropriate strategies to deal with these issues. The systems theory is therefore viewed as holistic in nature and that each subsystem (in this case PR as a subsystem) relies on the support of other departments and the dominant coalition to succeed.

The *Relationship Management Theory* and the *relational paradigms* focus on the concepts of trust, mutuality, openness, mutual satisfaction, mutual understanding, and reciprocity in the relationship process. The focus is on the management of relationship between an organisation and its publics. Relationship then, is at the heart of PR practice. This relationship is managed through *communication*. The relationship management theory and the relational paradigm are consistent with the systems theory and the two-way symmetrical theory. Communication is therefore used strategically to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship. The theoretical statement of the *Excellence Theory* encapsulates the various theories and paradigms discussed in chapter 2 of the literature. The Excellence theory focuses on the practice of PR strategically in order for PR to contribute effectively to the bottom-line. The Excellence theory posits that PR must be part of the dominant coalition and must be based on two-way symmetrical communication if it is to achieve its goal of ensuring a mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and its publics. Furthermore, the Excellence theory is practiced at four key levels, the organisational, functional, societal, and the programme levels. At the *organisational level* the theory considers PR as a managerial function and part of the dominant coalition. In simple terms, the practitioner contributes to strategic decision-making. The practitioner scans the environment to identify potential publics that the organisation can develop a relationship with. Formative research is also used to evaluate the quality of relationship between the organisation and the publics and develop communication strategies to reinforce, improve, or maintain the relationship. At the *functional level* evaluation of PR programmes is critical in order to contribute to improving organisational and societal effectiveness.

The PR functions can be audited by comparing the structure and processes with those performed in other departments with similar structures and processes or with theoretical principles from scholarly research. At the *programme level* components of the overall communication programmes such as media relations, marketing communication, community relations, or employee relations are evaluated to determine their level of effectiveness. Such programmes are considered successful when they influence cognitions, attitudes, and behaviours of both the organisation and its publics. At the *societal level*, PR ensures the organisation is accountable to society through its ethical behaviour and social responsibility programmes. This is the impact of organisations going beyond business goals. Organisations affect other organisations, individuals, and publics in the society. Their effectiveness is therefore tied to their responsibility to society. When PR contributes to the social responsibility of organisations, it is considered to have value.

Based on the theoretical statements and the review of the PR models which highlighted the essential guidelines for excellent PR practice, and in relation to the key findings from the study, it can be concluded that PR practice within the financial services sector cannot be fully accepted as having the key excellent principles. The results noted serious gaps between the characteristics of excellent communication in terms of the models and roles, and actual practice. The following key findings defined the research:

- PR practitioners in the financial services sector do not have communication/PR background. The PR department (mostly combined with marketing) is headed by a professional with a background in marketing or finance.
- PR is mostly given a marketing focus in terms of conceptualisation.
- Practitioners, especially those with a non-PR educational background, mostly believe experience in the field is enough to improve their knowledge of PR practice.
- Measurement of PR programmes is mostly informal in nature with media clippings dominating the measurement process.
- Social media measurement is not practiced much and where it is practiced, measurement is based on likes and comments.
- Importance of research is acknowledged but not practiced much.

- Evaluative research is mostly informal and tends to focus on outputs and outtakes more than outcomes and impacts.
- Formative research has a marketing focus rather than a purely PR focus. Most research is based on customer satisfaction surveys rather than attitudinal research.
- PR practice based on the four models of PR with a strong leaning towards asymmetric and symmetrical practice.
- Practitioners are not part of the decision-making body although they are sometimes invited to sit “in attendance” during executive management meetings. Most however report directly to the CEO.
- PR is practiced both at the technician and managerial levels.
- Culture plays a huge role in PR practice in Ghana.
- Interpersonal relationship is integral to relationship building.
- Absence of social networking sites limit the reach of practitioners.
- Advocacy is practiced at a low level.

As noted earlier, the excellence characteristics supports the various paradigms and theoretical applications discussed in the literature, that is, public relations must be strategic, be based on relationship management, and focused on symmetrical communication processes. The current landscape of the financial services sector means that PR practice must promote openness, honesty, based on trustworthiness, mutual understanding, collaboration, and sound ethical practices in order to build, maintain, and sustain effective relationship between the organisation and its publics. What this means is that PR practice must be holistic in nature. In view of this, it is recommended that the proposed framework for effective PR practice within the financial services sector should consist of three main building blocks – strategic approach, symmetrical approach (asymmetrical and symmetrical), and relational approach - each built around clusters of sub-themes and processes which are discussed in turn. Because the PR process is a continuous cycle, the framework should be considered as a continuous process and not separate. They are interdependent and function at all the levels of the PR process. The framework also represents a holistic view of what constitutes excellent communication management within the financial services sector. The proposed framework will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

5.5. SUMMARY

The current chapter discussed and interpreted the results of the one-on-one interviews held with 22 PR practitioners within the financial services sector. In terms of demographics, there were more males (15) than females (7). Most of the participants were in their mid-thirties or early forties. The study also found that the majority of the participants had marketing or other business backgrounds with very few having a communication background. Whereas some who did not have formal education/knowledge in communication/PR had taken some certificate or diploma courses in PR, others had not. Regarding designations, the study found that most of the departments were merged with marketing.

In line with one of the objectives which sought to determine the conceptualisation of PR by practitioners, results showed that PR had different but inter-related definitions. PR was viewed by mainly publicity, relationship and reputational management, creating a positive image. A significant finding from the study was that PR was also defined from a marketing perspective.

Another objective was to analyse the views of practitioners about the various PR models, specifically the four models of PR as posited by James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984). Results showed that PR was practiced at all the levels with a strong leaning towards asymmetric and symmetric communication. A significant finding here was the practice of marketing from a marketing perspective. The findings showed marketing and PR department were integrated and so the activities of the department tended to lean towards marketing more than PR. Measurement and evaluation of PR programmes were mostly unscientific and also focus more on traditional means rather than digital analytics. Media clippings and media content analysis dominated the measurement process and were used to determine programme success. Results also showed focus of PR is more on development and production of communication materials rather than research, especially attitudinal research.

The chapter also analysed the activities that practitioners performed. It sought to determine whether the roles performed were technical, managerial, or both. Results showed PR in the financial services sector was both managerial and technical.

Participants engaged in a number of activities including media relations, production of communication materials, and communication strategies. Although participants were involved in strategic planning, they were not part of the executive management and so could not influence decisions in the way that the excellence PR demands. They were not involved in the decision-making process although they did “sit in” during executive management meetings.

The study also revealed that the environment that an organisation finds itself in greatly influences how PR is practiced. In this regard, participants believed that cultural and political factors greatly influenced how the profession is practiced.

Participants indicated the need for proper policies to regulate the industry, especially in the area of professionalism and ethical behaviour. Emphasis was placed on training of top management in the profession.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the analysis and interpretation of the results of the research. The analysis was based on the structure of the interviews and linked to findings in literature. As the goal of this research is to develop a framework for PR practice within the financial services sector, a framework for the practice of effective or excellent PR was proposed. The current chapter will focus on the summary of the entire research work, make conclusions based on the key issues realised from the results and make recommendations to deal with these issues. The chapter will also present an empirical framework for PR practice in the financial services sector. The framework will be based on the various theoretical statements realised in literature and the issues drawn from the interviews. The chapter will therefore summarise the entire study in a concise and comprehensible way that allows the researcher to clearly show his understanding of the research problem, thereby answering the ‘*so what?*’ question, which is usually the focus of all scientific research. This closing chapter will therefore be structured based on the research problem and research objectives.

6.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The goal of the study was to develop a framework for effective PR practice within the financial services sector. In this regard, the study sought to determine how PR was conceptualised and practiced - at the theoretical and role levels - by PR/communication practitioners in the financial services sector. What was evident from the findings was that most of the people heading the communications department of the various organisations did not have a communication background. These practitioners had mostly a marketing background and were performing dual roles of a marketer and a PR practitioner. Indeed, some did not have any of these backgrounds but rather had backgrounds in law, business development and other disciplines. The dual roles were reflected in the titles given to the departments - Marketing (and) Communication. The study realised that the practitioners, as part of their MBA, went through a semester course in basic PR, hence the conviction that this was enough to know how to practice PR effectively. The marketing background also showed in the

way PR was conceptualised. Several of the practitioners conceptualised PR in terms of publicity, and most significantly, by using marketing terms. PR was thus given a marketing focus in its conceptualised form.

Significantly, research and evaluation were mostly unscientific and research was mostly informal in nature. Although research was viewed as an integral part of PR, this was more talked about than actually done. Formative research to determine attitudes and perception as well as understanding before programmes were done was rare among participants. The situation was the same with evaluative research where evaluation was mostly through word of mouth, logs, internal feedback, debriefing sessions, unsolicited feedback from external publics, mystery shopping, etc. Very few engaged in actual scientific evaluation. Scientific research, when done, was part of a broader institutional research and mainly focused on customer satisfaction surveys rather than an initiative of the PR department. The department used part of the overall institutional research result to formulate its strategies. Another significant finding is that not much was made of web analytics although participants realised its importance. Very few used any form of web analytics such as Google analytics for research, monitoring and evaluation. Measurement of online media was based on 'likes' and 'coverage' more than 'content' and 'communities'. Overall, measurement of PR programmes was based on outputs (media clippings and extent of coverage) more than on outcomes. Media clippings, in particular, played a key role in the measurement of programme success as the findings demonstrated. For many participants, the number of times their organisation received coverage was an indication that they were doing well. The result demonstrated a domination of media clippings, and to an extent content analysis, as a tool in the measurement of PR programmes. This, among other factors, is due to the fact that management want to see the 'good' name of the organisation in the media at all times. Comments from participants reflected this trend. Media monitoring was however practiced mostly using traditional methods. Many of the organisations do not even have social media presence, although they did indicate plans to join soon.

The research also found that some participants would prefer to speak the good deeds of their organisations but were not prepared to volunteer negative information which may jeopardise their organisation. The phrase "washing one's dirty linen in public" was used frequently by practitioners to explain that it was not appropriate to share negative

information, especially in an area as sensitive as the financial sector. It must be noted that not everyone shared this view. Some practitioners, especially, those who had a strong communication background, differed with this position. Although they did not advocate a full disclosure, they were however of the view that being transparent and seeking help is better than trying to hide because when the information eventually surfaces, the repercussions would be greater. They were of the view that in this technological era, trying to hide negative information would not be effective. Generally, many participants noted that circumstances will dictate whether to volunteer negative information or not.

On changing of behaviour, it was realised that PR efforts were focused on changing the behaviour of publics/stakeholders more than management. Results revealed that due to the lack of understanding about the purpose of PR by senior management, it was usually difficult to change their behaviour, especially in situations where they take decisions likely to create issues. The boundary spanning role of practitioners was sometimes ineffective as senior management implemented policies without input from PR practitioners. This situation occurs mainly because PR is not part of senior management or what is referred to as the *dominant coalition*. They are therefore unable to influence policy or effectively partake in the decision-making process. Overall, results showed that PR is practiced at both the asymmetrical and the symmetrical levels. There is however a slight leaning towards the asymmetrical level compared to the symmetrical level.

Concerning the activities that PR practitioners perform, the result indicated that PR in the financial services sector is practiced at both the technician and managerial levels. At the strategic level, participants were very much involved in strategic planning. At the reporting level, most of the participants reported to the CEO. A few however, reported to either the marketing manager or the business development manager who, in turn, reported to the CEO. The research also found that PR was not part of the executive decision-making body. What was interesting though was that the PR managers were sometimes made to sit in executive management meetings “in attendance,” to offer useful advice where needed. They were not, however, active participants in deliberations by the dominant coalition. Participants attributed this situation to the lack of understanding of PR. PR was also sometimes placed under

marketing or made part of corporate affairs - consisting of legal, HR and marketing communication - and headed by a legal practitioner.

Concerning their role as advocates, especially for internal and external publics, the results revealed that many participants did not play this effectively. The advocacy role was geared towards benefitting the organisation more than mutual benefits. Most participants saw their responsibility as towards their organisations rather than to the stakeholders.

The research concluded by looking at the general PR industry in Ghana. Results demonstrated that PR is growing exponentially. Many PR practitioners are now occupying managerial positions. Participants noted though that the profession still has a long way to go before it is fully accepted, especially by senior management. Lack of professionalism, unethical practices, lack of understanding of the purpose of PR by both senior management and society, and budgetary constraints, were some of the issues raised as being factors that inhibit the growth of the profession in Ghana. Results also showed that the practice is influenced very much by the cultural and political environment within the country, which is consistent with literature. Overall, the results demonstrated that PR in Ghana is at an advanced stage despite these challenges.

6.3. CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The previous section summarised the research objectives that were formulated in chapter one. The next session will briefly discuss conclusions on the specific research objectives. This is to ensure that the objectives for the research were achieved and also determine if the research problem was adequately addressed.

6.3.1. Conclusion on the conceptualisation and practice of public relations by means of literature review

The first objective was to investigate how PR was conceptualised and practiced by means of literature review. Based on the literature reviewed in chapters 2 and 3, it can be concluded that PR worldwide is defined based on one's (be it individual, organisational or societal) understanding of the concept. PR can be defined as reputational management, publicity, management of communication, management function, developing strategies that gain social legitimacy for organisations, a two-way

communication, among others. What is certain from the many definitions is that PR is planned, deliberate and develops strategies aimed at influencing public opinion and impacting society in order to enhance the reputation of organisations. Based on literature, the study also concludes that PR has grown in terms of practice globally. Globalisation has influenced how PR is practiced. The study also concluded that PR practice is not based on one particular model, especially the two-way symmetrical model, and that several factors influence the type of model used in the practice. PR is also practiced both at the technician and managerial level. However, its effectiveness is determined by support from senior management and accurate knowledge of the field by practitioners. The study posits that PR practice has variations in different environments, mainly influenced by political and cultural factors. In Africa, and Ghana for that matter, the concept of '*ubuntu*' certainly shapes how PR is practiced.

6.3.2. Conclusion on the conceptualisation of public relations by means of empirical data

PR practitioners generally have an idea of the purpose of PR. While some of the conceptualisations are in line with known definitions, others are conceptualised based on the background of the practitioners, especially in the area of marketing. Based on the results, the study concludes that PR in the financial services sector is associated with information dissemination/publicity, relationship and reputation management, creating a positive image, and marketing - using marketing terms to define PR.

6.3.3. Conclusion on the selected models of public relations by means of empirical data

This objective sought to analyse the views of PR practitioners in the financial services sector on the models of PR. Based on one-on-one in-depth interviews with practitioners, it is concluded that PR is practiced at all levels. There is however a strong leaning towards asymmetric and symmetric PR. PR practice is asymmetric because the conditions under which two-way symmetrical PR or excellent PR can be practiced are not fully seen. Practitioners still see themselves as working for the interest of their organisations and their duty is to influence public perception rather than their organisation. The lack of understanding and value placed on PR by management, the lack of professional background of most practitioners, and the association with marketing means that PR will continue to be asymmetrical. PR practice is still growing

but has not reached the level where it can be considered as two-way symmetrical only. The study also concludes that two-way symmetrical practice is also practiced within the sector. Practitioners engage key stakeholders through two-way dialogue. However, there is lack of appreciation of these models as practitioners do not engage fully in either the asymmetric or symmetrical models. The lack of scientific research and evaluation means that PR cannot be practiced effectively. The focus on informal means of intelligence gathering is likely to hamper the relationship building efforts of practitioners. As stated earlier, the philosophy of the dominant coalition regarding the value of PR is key in the effective practice of PR in the sector. The overall conclusion on this objective is that PR is practiced based on the four models of PR but there is a focus on the two-way asymmetric and the two-way symmetric. There is also a strong influence of the personal influence and cultural interpreter models. It is also posited that within the current financial environment, attempts to focus on the two-way symmetrical, which is considered the ideal form of PR practice, will not work.

6.3.4. Conclusions on the public relations roles (activities) by means of empirical data

The final objective sought to determine the roles that practitioners in the financial services sector engage in. Based on the result, it is concluded that the PR practice is at both the technician and managerial level. It is headed by a manager with assistants. PR practice is not fully strategic, and this affects the performance of practitioners in the sector. Since the department is not part of the dominant coalition, it cannot influence policy decisions effectively. Senior management are not likely to value the views of PR if they do not understand the purpose of PR. This can only happen if PR is made part of the executive decision-making body and the practitioner is made to report to the senior-most person – the CEO or the one next to the CEO. In a volatile environment such as the financial services sector, efforts by practitioners to build and maintain mutual relationships will be difficult if they do not obtain the support of management or they are placed under another department. PR practice at the managerial level was found to have several challenges, some of which have been enumerated above. The fielding of the department with people with more business background than communication and the merging of both communication and marketing as one department poses a challenge to effective PR practice.

6.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the study. It is posited that following these recommendations will lead to effective PR practice in the financial services sector.

6.4.1. Training of department staff and management

The result of the study clearly shows that PR practice cannot be effective if staff in the department do not have a full grasp of the purpose of PR. It is also clear from the result that excellent PR is being affected by the lack of understanding and the value placed on PR by senior management. Based on this, it is recommended that practitioners, at both the technician and managerial levels, be engaged in constant training to enable them to fully appreciate the purpose and role of PR in organisations and society. Given the fact that most have a marketing background, an understanding of the field and the activities PR plays will influence how these practitioners eventually practice the profession. Sponsorship for certificate or postgraduate training will be essential in the delivery of effective services for the organisation. The heads of the departments, together with their deputies and other subordinates, should be fully trained in the field of PR for them to have a better understanding of what the profession actually entails. Otherwise speaking, effective PR practice should be knowledge based. Although experience is essential, the theoretical foundation is critical to balance the experience. When this is done, it is believed that PR will not be practiced with a marketing focus. Practitioners will also understand what constitutes excellent PR and will be likely to develop the right strategies to practice excellent PR.

Although literature acknowledges the lack of understanding by the dominant coalition as influencing the practice of excellent PR, the idea of training the dominant coalition has, however, not been broached. It is therefore recommended that training should not only be for the marketing communication department. It is important for practitioners to engage senior management on the essence of PR and how it contributes to the organisational development. Regardless of the training that practitioners engage in, if the decision-makers do not understand and appreciate the value of excellent PR, practitioners in the industry will still face challenges in the implementation of excellent PR practice. The training of senior management and the

influencers within the organisation will contribute to raising the value of PR in the eyes of senior management.

This means that the department should be able to develop its own training policies for the internal publics of the organisation, especially the decision-makers. This training should also cover sectional heads including legal, marketing (in situations where marketing is separated from the communications department), HR and business development. This also ensures the identification of clearly defined roles between PR and other functions. This will also prevent misunderstanding of different managerial roles.

6.4.2. Focus on formal environmental scanning and evaluative research

The findings of the research show that formative research to determine public understanding, knowledge, and attitude is not given priority in the formulation of programmes. Formative research is however critical to the success of any PR programme. Excellent PR must be based on understanding the needs and attitudes of the constituents. Knowledge and understanding of constituents ensure that the right programmes are developed to build mutually beneficial relationships. It is recommended that the current practice of focusing on marketing-oriented research, which is mainly based on customer satisfaction, is not sustainable in the practice of excellent PR. It is therefore recommended that, since almost all the PR departments do not have their own research unit, the PR department work with their various organisational research units to constantly conduct scientific research that is PR specific. Customer satisfaction surveys tend to focus on marketing-oriented issues more than attitudinal issues. Formative research allows practitioners to detect issues/opportunities as well as determine the understanding between management and key publics. PR research therefore goes beyond customer satisfaction. Development of PR programmes cannot be effective if these are not backed by formal research. Evaluation research on the other hand will allow practitioners to effectively gauge the outcome of their programmes. In the short-term, practitioners will be able to determine the effect of programmes on cognitions, attitudes, and behaviours of publics and management. In the long-term, it will demonstrate the effect of PR efforts on the relationship between the organisation and the publics. The current focus of evaluation using mostly informal methods will not be successful. It is recommended

that more scientific and rigorous methods such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups are used for evaluation purposes. It is posited that PR will gain high value as it will be able to show how it clearly contributes to the bottom-line. It is believed that the use of scientific methods in measurement and evaluation will also be critical in persuading senior management on the value of PR in contributing to achieving organisational goals. Formal evaluation must be conducted often without neglecting the informal methods. Evaluation should be a continuous process through the PR process. It should not only be at the end of a programme.

Again, it is recommended that web analytics be an integral part of the measurement and evaluation process. The digital evolution has greatly shaped the way PR is practiced. Practitioners in the financial services sector therefore cannot rely solely on the traditional forms of measurement and evaluation. The advent of the Internet and social networking sites means that information is now in the hands of the publics. News is now what the public says it is. This makes it imperative for practitioners to use the available web analytical tools to monitor, measure, and evaluate PR and sentiments. It is also recommended that measurement and evaluation of internet and social media should not focus on “likes” and “coverage” but “content” and “community” as these tell the real stories.

Measurement and evaluation should also not be based on media hits and coverage but, in terms of actual effects on organisational-public relationships. The findings showed measurement and evaluation tends to focus on outputs rather than outcomes. It is, however recommended that practitioners in the financial services sector focus on outcomes without neglecting outputs and outtakes. Essentially, practitioners should focus on the effect of PR programmes on awareness, attitudinal change, action, and behaviour. This can be in the short, medium, and long term. It is believed that focusing on outcomes will eventually result in impact - increase in revenue, more clients/customers, cost savings, and strong relationships. The PR departments should therefore develop a policy on measurement and evaluation procedures that will clearly spell out how measurement and evaluation of programmes will be conducted. This will guide the department in truly showing return on investment (ROI).

6.4.3 Separation of public relations functions from other functions

As indicated in literature, for PR to be truly effective, it must not be sublimated to other departments. The findings of the research showed that PR is either integrated into marketing under the name 'marketing communication' or placed under or part of other departments such as marketing, legal, and business development. Only a few institutions had a separate department in charge of communications. However, if PR in these institutions is to be truly effective, it must be recognised as a separate management function that exists to link all the other departments in an interdependent way. It is therefore recommended that PR should be given a separate role and be headed by a professional PR manager in order for the department to operate in a more strategic manner. As the results found, when the PR function is placed under a different management function, the focus tends to be on publicity to the neglect of key communication functions. For the contribution of PR to be truly valued in terms of how they contribute directly and indirectly to an organisation's success, separating it from other management functions and being given the necessary resources to work is critical. The findings of the research give an indication that the merging of PR with marketing in particular, and headed mostly by professionals with a marketing background, is detrimental to the role of PR in establishing mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and its publics. This is because activities of the department tend to have a marketing focus. It is proposed that the separation will ensure that practitioners focus on proactive actions that enhance reputation. The current image of the financial services sector is that of suspicion and this is likely to continue if effective PR strategies are not used as a way of gaining credibility. There is no doubt that the integration of marketing and communication functions under the concept of 'integrated marketing communication' is especially strong in the financial services sector. There is also the need to recognise that these functions are different even if they have overlapping functions. Much as the assumption that integration of the two functions will lead to a sublimation of PR to marketing has not been empirically validated, the findings show a strong focus on product and brand management, market penetration and development, publicity, and less on gaining social legitimacy through the implementation of strategic programmes influenced by formal environmental scanning and evaluation. It is posited that for excellent PR to occur, PR should not be

integrated with other functions. They should remain distinct but coordinate to maintain effective organisational-stakeholder relationship.

6.4.4. Empowerment of the PR manager in the decision making process

A key outcome realised from the research was that PR was not part of the decision-making process. However, as seen from literature, for PR to be practiced in an excellent way, it must be part of the decision-making process. The PR department must therefore be empowered to not just “sit in attendance” but be an active participant in the decision-making process. Although the practitioner has access to the chief executives, they cannot influence decisions effectively if they are not part of the executive management that take the day-to-day decisions which affect the organisation. It is proposed that PR can only contribute to strategic management of the organisation’s publics if it is made an integral part of the dominant coalition. By being part of the dominant coalition, the practitioner can influence organisational decisions and also ensure the efficiency of the department. The purpose of PR is to proactively engage in activities that build long term relationships with publics that can affect the organisation’s mission and that can be affected by the organisation’s policies. The outcome of PR efforts is relationship premised on trust, reciprocity, commitment and mutual satisfaction. This can only be achieved if PR is practiced in an excellent way. But for that to occur, the department must be part of the decision-making body. The research proposes that empowering the PR function to be part of the dominant coalition will enhance the ability of the department to serve the interest of the organisation while also ensuring a mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and its publics.

6.4.5. Integration of communication functions across departments

Findings from the research show that internal communication functions are often shared with the human resource and administration department. Moreover, there are occasions where these functions appear to overlap, leading to conflict situations. However, in order to have an excellent communication function, it is proposed that all communications across the various departments be integrated into the PR department and coordinated by the department. To build mutually beneficial relationships internally and externally, messages must be consistent and aligned to the organisation’s goals. Internal communication activities ultimately affect external

communication and reputation. The integration and coordination of communication activities by the PR outfit will result in the organisation speaking with one voice.

6.4.6. Two-way communication

The purpose of the PR function is to build and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and its publics. For that to happen there must be a mutual understanding between the organisation and its publics. This is based on dialogue or what is commonly referred to as two-way communication. Literature describes two types - the asymmetrical and the symmetrical. Though both are dialogue based, the asymmetrical is regarded as persuasive communication with the purpose of serving the organisation's interest while two-way symmetrical is regarded as the ideal and the most ethical form of PR practice. Much has been said about the excellent nature of the two-way symmetrical being the best form of PR practice as it considers public interest, uses collaboration, and negotiation, and reflects the interdependent nature of organisations. The two-way symmetrical also reflects the concept of trust, transparency, honesty, commitment and shared vision, and mutual understanding. This research proposes a combination of the two-way symmetrical and the two-way asymmetrical. The nature of the financial services sector is such that information must be carefully managed without causing fear and panic among stakeholders. It is generally acknowledged that the financial services sector is undergoing serious credibility challenges due to past events of perceived fraud, dishonesty, and lack of transparency. In the technological era, the need to be accountable and open has become even more intense. Two-way symmetrical communication is therefore regarded as the ideal form of communication in establishing a relationship premised on trust, honesty, open communication, interdependency, and mutual interaction.

Two-way symmetrical communication has been promoted at length as the best form of PR as it is reciprocal, ethical, and based on dialogue. However, based on the results of the findings and review of literature, it is proposed that the two models can be practiced together effectively. Literature views the asymmetrical as premised on persuasive communication to influence attitudes and behaviours of key publics to take an action that will benefit the organisation rather than the mutual benefit the symmetrical deals with. In other words, it is based on self-interest although the element of feedback features strongly, but the feedback is used to develop strategies that are

in the best interest of the organisation. In the financial services sector, full disclosure of an organisation's actions can result in unintended consequences such as closure of accounts, moving of investment, among others. This is more so when most of the population do not fully understand the financial services sector and do not trust the sector. It is believed that PR can be persuasive yet ethical and based on trust, honesty, and credibility. The element of feedback within asymmetrical communication ensures that practitioners are able to review the cost and benefits of the organisation's actions to the external publics and make adjustments which are deemed ethical. The nature of asymmetrical communication means that remaining loyal to both one's employer and key stakeholders can be challenging. However, it is believed that following the golden rule of "do unto others that which you want done unto you" will ensure that practitioners balance their loyalty to their organisation and their commitment to ensuring the organisation's stakeholders get the best from the organisation. In PR, persuasive communication is crucial, but it can be done ethically. When creating persuasive messages, practitioners can use a number of ethical strategies to ensure that their messages are sincere, honest, and legitimate. It is believed that the "public interest", a term used in symmetrical communication, can still be served when the actions of the practitioner are said to be sincere. The two-way asymmetrical concept has various benefits including the idea of feedback as well as consideration of the outcomes of persuasive messages on publics. Even though the concept appears to be based on self-interest, it does incorporate relevant concerns of those that its actions affect. Literature suggests some ethical strategies that can be used in persuasive communication, including Baker and Martinson's TARES test (Truthfulness, Authenticity, Respect, Equality, and Social responsibility).

The dialogue and reciprocal based two-way symmetrical, if strictly adhered to as Grunig argues, will mean giving up critical information necessary for the survival of the organisation. In a conservative business environment like Ghana, that will not happen. Moreover, dealing with financial matters requires tact and carefulness without compromising ethical standards. Again, because the financial services sector deals with different stakeholders, practicing only two-way symmetrical communication will unquestionably lead to conflicts with different publics which may be difficult to resolve. This research agrees with literature that says that open communication is not necessarily a panacea for ethical behaviour and in some circumstances may not be

appropriate. This research also agrees with literature that two-way symmetry cannot be used as a “one-size fits all solution,” That is, there may be occasions when the two-way symmetry cannot work due to legal or regulatory issues. Based on this, it is proposed that PR in the financial services sector should be a balance between the two influential models. Open-based communication should not override the need to disseminate information that is based on truth, trust, and sincerity.

6.4.7. Development of social network policy

Much has been written about the influence of social media on contemporary PR practice. Social media has opened the way for PR to become more interactive as practitioners constantly communicate with their publics who are active and ever present online. In the financial services sector the use of social media, as the research discovered, was not prominent. In fact, many of the departments did not even have social media accounts. Social media has become the new interactive tool that practitioners can use to reach out to their publics and further create a better and sustained relationship. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social media management services serve as an integral part in businesses worldwide. In some businesses, individuals have been employed for the sole purpose of managing the social media account of the organisation. The situation does not appear to be the case in the financial services sector in Ghana. Social media is not only about sharing information it can also be used as a measurement tool to measure PR outcomes. This means practitioners do not have to just look at likes, followers or shares but measure real outcomes in relation to PR goals. Social media can be used to bring publics closer than ever before. In this vein, it is recommended that practitioners develop a social media policy as well as social media accounts on relevant social networks that will enable them to engage their constituents fully. This will also mean they will need to train some of their staff to be in charge of this process. The social media policy will demonstrate how conversations around products and services, brands, and the organisation itself are being socialised. At a time of mistrust and credibility issues, engaging the virtual publics is essential in telling the story of the organisation and building mutually beneficial relationship for the long-term.

6.4.8. A strong focus on advocacy role

The findings of the research noted that practitioners in the financial services sector are not really involved in playing the advocacy role required of them. One of the key roles of PR managers is to serve as advocates for key stakeholders. This allows them to interpret the concerns of key publics to management, get management to understand these concerns, and work together to build a stronger relationship. Advocacy is a two-dimensional process that allows the practitioner to seek the interest of both the organisation and the publics. Practitioners must therefore recognise the role of advocacy in their jobs - advocacy, not only for the organisation but more importantly for the publics on whom the success or failure of the organisation depends. This agrees with literature that states that PR will continually be apologising for its perceived lack of objectivity unless it embraces its advocacy role. There is therefore the need for practitioners to be strongly involved in advocating for and on behalf of the key stakeholders. The nature of the financial sector means that key stakeholders will have serious issues/concerns and these concerns must be addressed in line with organisational goals for mutual benefits. Practitioners can therefore not be disseminators of organisational information but active participants in the organisational process as they seek a mutual understanding between the organisation and its publics.

6.5. THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the present study is to develop a framework for effective PR practice in the financial services sector. The framework is premised on the theoretical statements discussed in literature and the findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the study.

In the previous chapter, it was posited that PR is a continuous cycle. Hence the framework should be considered as a continuous process premised on clusters and non-linear components. The framework is perceived as a holistic view of the PR process at the functional, organisational, and departmental levels, and must be practiced simultaneously and not sequentially if it is to achieve its purpose.

The framework consists of three main building blocks - strategic, relational and symmetrical. Within the broader building blocks are clusters of activities that define how the various building blocks should operate. Again, it must be emphasised that these activities are not sequential but must be practiced simultaneously as one depends on the other. The framework should therefore be viewed from a holistic and integrated approach. The cluster of activities has equal levels of importance. Indeed, some of the activities overlap hence one is not more important than the other. The framework represents PR practice at both the theoretical level and communication role level, especially at the managerial level, thus the absence of one invariably affects the effectiveness of the others. It is posited that the framework will promote a proactive approach to PR practice within the financial services sector. PR practitioners are at the forefront of ensuring that their organisations are regarded as the first choice when it comes to doing business. The framework therefore presents a proactive means by which practitioners can engage in excellent PR in order to build and maintain relationships that will stand the test of time.

Figure 6 below demonstrates the nature of the framework. It consists of the three key building blocks, each with several characteristics that defines it:

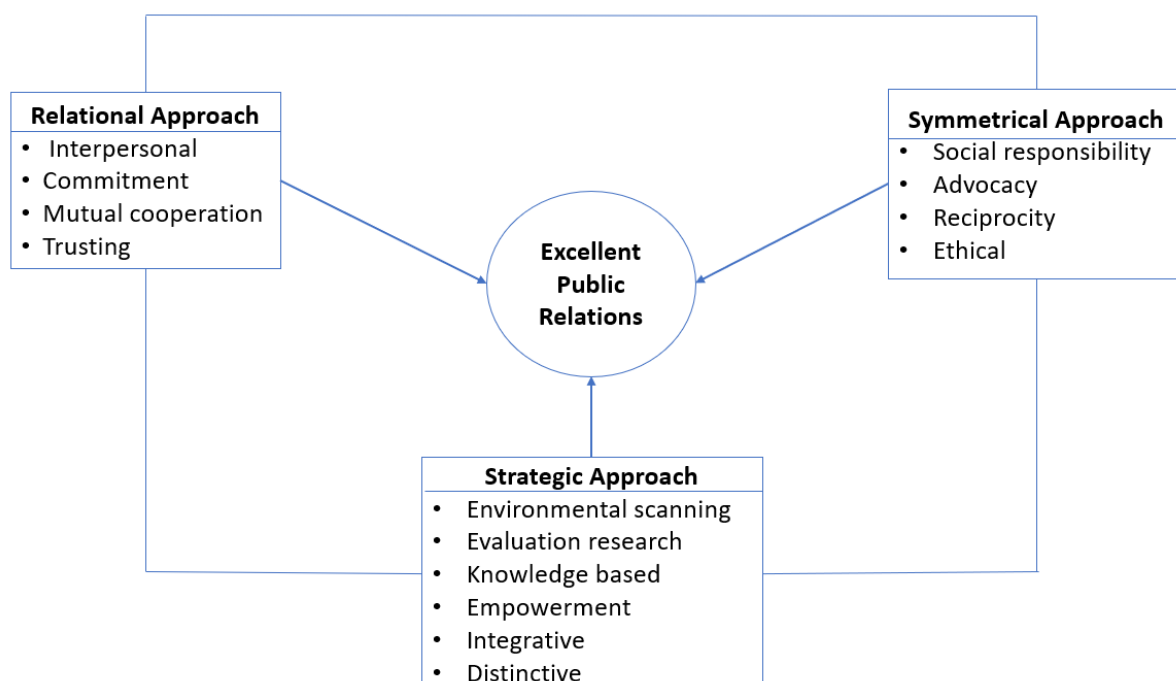


Figure 6: Framework for excellent public relations practice in the FSS.

6.5.1. Explanation of the framework

This section will discuss the three building blocks that form the framework and the approaches that define each building block. It will start with the strategic building block, followed by symmetrical and relational. As it is depicted in the figure above, the development of the framework was premised on the theoretical statements which were empirically verified through the findings of the study. A framework, as seen in the figure above, is quite simple and easy to understand.

6.5.1. 1. Strategic Approach

In the literature it was posited that for PR to excel and contribute to organisational effectiveness it must be practiced strategically. The results of the findings however show this is mostly not the case in the financial services sector. This framework posits that for PR to really contribute to the bottom-line in the financial services sector, it should be strategic in nature. As the framework depicts, for PR practice to be really effective, it must be founded on sound research. Since much of the activities of PR in the sector are influenced more by informal research than formal scientific research, practitioners are not likely to know the true effect of their programmes or the true attitudes or perceptions of their constituents. Research ensures that practitioners are able to develop comprehensive programmes that build trust, mutual satisfaction, and commitment. However, these cannot be fully achieved if there is not much focus on research. Tied to formative research is the need to engage in formal monitoring and evaluation. Again, this is essential as knowledge and understanding of how programmes are faring or have fared allows the practitioner to truly contribute to the bottom-line. Environmental scanning and evaluation research are very relevant to the relationship-building process.

For PR to be practiced strategically it must be based on knowledge and experience. The senior PR manager must have essential knowledge of the field including the theoretical underpinnings that influence the practice. Having professional knowledge of the profession will influence the policies and programmes that practitioners adopt to enhance organisational reputation. However, knowledge of the field should also extend to the executive as this is crucial in their understanding of the field and how it shapes organisational reputation. In addition, PR functions must be distinct from other management functions, especially marketing. This is important if the PR department

is to effectively sell the organisation rather than focus on selling the organisation's products and services. As the figure shows, PR managers should be empowered to be part of the decision-making body. The ability to truly influence policy is dependent on the ability to be an active member of the executive and one whose views are taken seriously. This will also help change the mindset of the executive about PR being about publicity and media. Finally, the communication functions of the various departments should be integrative and coordinated by the PR department. This will allow for message consistency. The recognition of the strategic role of the PR function is critical to the success of PR programmes.

6.5.1.2. Symmetrical Approach

In line with the findings of the research and based on the literature reviewed, the research proposes that PR in the financial services sector should be symmetrical. However, it deviates from the much discussed total two-way symmetrical communication. This framework posits that practicing both symmetrical and asymmetrical communication is more ideal than focusing on the two-way symmetrical communication.

For two-way communication to be really effective, it must be based on disclosure and transparency. Symmetrical PR is dialogue-based and aimed at influencing behaviour of management and key publics. Communication is enhanced because it is based on shared values, common views, and understanding. The participants are both active. Disclosure and transparency are indications that the views of key stakeholders are considered important. This allows for the creation of a dynamic communication environment that is built on trust and authenticity. However, disclosure cannot always be complete. As expressed when discussing asymmetrical communication, there are situations, especially in the financial services sector, when full disclosure will not be in the interest of the organisation. Disclosure can therefore be full or limited depending on the situation. Limited disclosure should be ethical in all situations. PR practitioners are also socially responsible to the publics they serve, and open communication is therefore important in gaining social legitimacy to operate. The framework therefore suggests that practitioners in the financial services sector must engage in socially responsible acts if they are to gain the trust of stakeholders. A key feature of symmetrical communication is the notion of public consent. However, consent cannot

be granted without the required information. It is therefore important for practitioners to involve the publics on issues that concern them in order to gain their consent. Socially responsible behaviour is ethical and important for practitioners. Practitioners cannot expect to build long lasting relationships without seeking approval of the key publics. Approval is based on truthful information. The symmetrical framework also projects PR as ethical. In the effort to develop and sustain mutually beneficial relationship, PR in the financial services sector must be based on ethical decision-making. The central theme for two-way symmetrical communication is dialogue. Gaining mutual understanding must, however, be guided by ethical considerations. This means that both parties must treat each other with respect and openness. PR practice must therefore be premised on sincerity, truthfulness, appropriateness, and comprehensiveness if it is to be effective. This also ensures that practitioners are accountable to their publics. Finally, in symmetrical PR, as suggested by the framework, the notion of mutual interest is important for establishing a sustainable two-way relationship. Reciprocity is based on the notion that people give as much as they want to receive. Reciprocity is essential for the development of trust and goodwill in any relationship. When there is mutual interest, the outcome is mutual satisfaction, trust, and commitment to each other. Reciprocity also demonstrates a sense of responsiveness to each other's needs. When key stakeholders know that their needs and concerns are always factored in the decision-making process, they are likely to return the favour through recommendations, and positive coverage, among others.

6.5.1.3. Relational Approach

The third building block, relational PR, is premised on building a strong relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders. Here the framework demonstrates that building of beneficial relationships is dependent on a number of factors. Several factors have been discussed in literature as defining relational PR. In this framework, relational PR should be based on trust. Trust is the basis of all relationships. In an environment filled with mistrust and suspicion, this approach becomes even more critical for relationship building. Practitioners must work to build confidence in their stakeholders to get them believing in the sector again. Publics should have confidence in the ability of the organisation to take care of their investments. At the heart of PR is relationship management. The purpose of PR is to establish and maintain relationship between the organisation and key stakeholders on whom the success of the

organisation depends. For PR to achieve its goal in the financial services sector, stakeholders must believe in the message of the organisation. Trust and credibility are two critical factors that a practitioner must possess. Trust is therefore essential in gaining credibility with the stakeholders. In addition to trust, relationship must be based on mutual cooperation between the organisation and key stakeholders. Mutual cooperation is embedded in the systems theory which acknowledges the interdependent nature of systems. Since the organisation and publics depend on each other, supporting each other for mutual gain is essential. Practitioners must therefore put in place policies to gain the cooperation of the publics. When publics are assured that their concerns are viewed as legitimate, the relationship will be improved. The opposite is also true where publics feel the organisation is only after its own self-interest. Support for the organisation will diminish and the organisation is likely to suffer. The relationship between the organisation and its publics should be strongly cultivated where concerns raised are looked at in sincerity. When this happens, the relationship will be regarded as based on mutual cooperation, which is fundamental for trust. The relational approach should also be based on mutual commitment. For the relationship to thrive, stakeholders must feel that the relationship is worth maintaining. Commitment refers to a desire to continue the relationship between two parties and thus every effort is expended to maintain it. Commitment occurs when parties believe in the value of the relationship. The framework therefore demonstrates that for effective PR to occur, it must be based on mutual commitment. If the organisation sees the publics as key to their survival it will be committed to ensuring that its publics are satisfied with their services. A satisfied public is also committed to ensuring that the organisation gains societal acceptance and legitimacy. Ultimately, commitment will lead to mutual satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and cooperation. Finally, relational PR must be practiced at the interpersonal level. The research demonstrated that interpersonal communication is very important in a culturally sensitive environment like Ghana. In other words, the cultural environment does not allow one to just do business without first establishing a relationship with the opinion leaders who are very much held in high esteem by their subjects. Interpersonal relationship is necessary to gain acceptance and help in times of need. Cultivating individual relationship with key stakeholders is necessary to be able to advocate strongly on behalf of the organisation. In the Ghanaian business environment, dealing with communities, regulators and other influential individuals at the interpersonal level is

regarded as a sign of deference. However interpersonal relationship must be based on ethical values which bind the work of the practitioner. Interpersonal interaction can be used as a driving force to influence mutual understanding, consensus, trust, and credibility. By this, the PR practitioner creates goodwill between himself, and by extension, the organisation and key stakeholders. Developing interpersonal communication skills through training will be crucial to cultivating interpersonal relationship.

Overall, relationships can be enhanced when practitioners in the financial services sector practice communication that is premised on honesty and timeliness as well as encouraging the free flow of important information that is of public interest. They must also disseminate accurate information while correcting inaccurate information without hesitation. They must also be sensitive to the cultural norms and beliefs while engaging in communication activities that lead to mutual understanding. Crucially, actions of practitioners must be based on ethical decisions.

6.6. FRAMEWORK JUSTIFICATION AND IMPLICATION FOR THEORY, POLICY AND PRACTICE

The importance of any scientific research is that audiences must be able to relate to the findings and also connect them to organisational challenges and what they already know. The implementation of the framework will therefore enhance PR practice in the financial services sector. The present study demonstrated that PR practice in the financial services sector is fraught with certain challenges and can therefore not be described as excellent. These challenges need to be addressed if PR practice in the sector is to improve. The paucity of literature on the subject of excellent PR practice in Ghana makes this study and its recommendations even more relevant. The present study is therefore critical in its contribution to the existing body of knowledge on excellent PR practice from a different cultural setting. The present framework presents an opportunity for practitioners in the financial services sector to review their *modus operandi* regarding the profession. The financial services sector is currently going through serious credibility challenges and the framework will assist practitioners to review their work and develop new policies that will enhance their work in rebuilding the trust of a sector bedevilled with suspicion and mistrust.

6.7. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The main contribution of this study is the development of an integrated, non-sequential framework for the practice of excellent public relations practice in the financial services sector of Ghana. The study has provided insight into the nature of public relations practice in Ghana. The framework was developed based on both theoretical/ literature review and empirical evidence. The framework also makes a significant contribution to the discussion on the practice of public relations from an African perspective. As far as the researcher is aware, this framework is the first of its kind in Ghana and contributes to the attempt by scholars on the continent to fashion a common theoretical framework that underpins the practice on the continent. another contribution of the study is that because the research was viewed from a practical point of view (perspectives of practitioners) it was able to offer practical solution that will improve efforts to manage reputation and contribute to organisational success. The solution is aligned to the principles of the Excellence study as well as the unique cultural environment of the country.

Since the objective of the research was to determine the conceptualisation and practice of PR vis-à-vis western principles, it has created new knowledge for the unique environment in Ghana in which there is the need for more research. The researcher believes that this research contributes to the debates on the applicability of the generic principles of excellent PR and specific applications in a different cultural setting by offering a framework of the key variables influencing the practice of PR in Ghana.

It is hoped that the framework will provide practical solution to practitioners not only in the financial services sector, but also in other sectors (transference) as well as public relations students embarking on a career in PR.

6.8. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study showed that much can be learnt in how the excellence study is practiced in different cultural settings. Also, in view of the fact that the present study focused on the financial services sector only, the following is recommended in terms of further research:

- One of the key issues that emerged from the research was attitudinal research in developing PR programmes. It is therefore important to determine whether communication strategies developed by practitioners are backed by formative and evaluative research, and if so, what goes into this research.
- There is also the need to conduct comprehensive research on measurement and evaluation research and methods used for such research. This aspect was highlighted in the current study. Much has been said about the importance of measurement and evaluation and the tools used and a study in this area will contribute to the wider discussion from an African perspective.
- In relation to the issue of measurement and evaluation is the use of online measurement and evaluation. This is also a weakness that the study highlighted and it will be essential to investigate this.
- The researcher also recommends a study into the knowledge, understanding, and usage of models of PR by practitioners on a wider scale. The study highlighted that some practitioners may not even be aware of the Excellence theory let alone the symmetrical models of PR practice. The question then is on what foundations are PR programmes are built on.
- An interesting area that future research can also look at is evaluating management perception and value of PR. This will contribute highly to the debate on placement of PR within the organisational structure in an African country like Ghana.
- Finally, the framework can be tested on other sectors to determine if the result will be the same or different. This will allow for a broader framework that can regulate PR practice in Ghana.

6.9. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to develop a framework for PR practice in the financial services sector. The study was premised on understanding the conceptualisation and practice of PR in relation to the models (purpose) and roles (activities) in the sector. Based on the result, an integrated non-sequential framework was proposed that allowed for excellent PR that is strategic, symmetrical, and relational. The framework, when practiced in its fullness, will provide the foundation for a solid

based relationship that is long-term, especially in a sector lacking credibility because of years of financial scandals.

LIST OF SOURCES

- Accredited in Public Relations (USA). *Public relations: a management function*.
http://www.praccreditation.org/secure/documents/APRSG_PR_Mgmt_Function.pdf (Accessed on 3rd March 2014).
- Adams, J, Khan, HT, Raeside, R, & White, D. 2007. *Research methods for graduate business and social science students*, Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications.
- Adler, E, & Clark, R. 2010. *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Akpabio, E. 2009. African public relations and the mainstream of global practice. *African Communication Research*. 2(3):351-366.
- Allotey-Pappoe, J. E. (2009). 'A History of Public Relations Practice in Ghana.' *COM 513: Introduction to Public Relations*. University of Education, Winneba. 28th September, 2009.
- Amujo, O. C. & Melewar, T. C. 2011. Contemporary challenges impacting on the practice of public relations in Nigeria (1990-2011). *PRism* 8(1):<http://www.prismjournal.org/homepage.html> (30th November 2014)
- Angus, M., & Kapanga, J. 2008. Light on the Dark Continent, in *The global brand*, edited by N Hollis, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 113-124
- Armenta, MW. 2007. The Financial Sector and Economic Development: Banking on the Role of Human Capital. *Journal of public and international affairs*, 18(9)187-203
- Attawura, P. 2010. *The problems associated with public relations practice in Ghana*. <http://philipatawura.wordpress.com/2010/12/20/the-problems-associated-with-public-relations-practice-in-ghana/> (Accessed 10th January 2014).
- Austin, EW, & Pinkleton, BE. 2006, *Strategic public relations management planning and managing effective communication programs*. , Mahwah, New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Austin, EW. & Pinkleton, BE. 2015. *Strategic Public Relations Management: Planning and Managing Effective communication programmes*. 3rd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Babbie, E. 2008. *The basics of social research*. 4th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Babbie, E. 2010. *The practice of social research*. 12th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth
- Baines, P, Eghan, J, & Jefkins, F. 2004. *Public relations: contemporary issues and techniques*. Boston, Elsevier/Butterworth-Heinemann.

- Bardhan, N & Patwardhan, P. 2004. Multinational corporations and public relations in a historically resistant host culture. *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol. 8(3),:246 – 263
- Bartlett, JL. 2011. Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility, in *The handbook of communication and corporate social responsibility*, edited by Ø Ihlen, JL Bartlett & S May. West-Sussex, Wiley-Blackwell. 67 – 86.
- Basit, TN. 2003. Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research*, 45(2), 143-154.
- Baskin, O., Hahn, J., Seaman, S. & Reines, D. 2010. Perceived effectiveness and implementation of public relations measurement and evaluation tools among European providers and consumers of PR services. *Public Relations Review*, 36: 105–111.
- Bates, D. 2006. *Mini-Me history: public relations from the dawn of civilisation*. Institute for Public Relations (IPR). <http://www.instituteforpr.org/pr-history/> (Accessed August 8th, 2014)
- Beard, M., *Running a Public Relations Department*. London: Kogan page
- Beavers-Moss, D. 2001. The credibility enhancer. *Bank marketing*, 27-31
- Bhattacharjee, A. 2012. *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices. Textbook collections*. Book 3. http://www.scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3. (Accessed 24 October 2014)
- Black, C. 2014. *The PR Professional's Handbook: Powerful, Practical Communications*. Philadelphia, PA. Kogan page
- Blackstone, A. 2012. *Principles of Sociological Inquiry: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*, v. 1.0. http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/reader/3585?e=blackstone_1.0-ch02#blackstone_1.0-ch02_s03 (Accessed 6 April 2016).
- Blankson, I. 2009. Public relations in sub-Saharan Africa, in *Global public relations: spanning borders, spanning cultures*, edited by AR Freitag & AQ Stokes. New York, NY: Routledge. 179-205.
- Boeije, HR. 2010. *Analysis in qualitative research*. London. Sage publication:
- Bogdan, R. & Biklen, SK. 2007. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*, 5th edition. Boston, Mass: Pearson
- Bortree, DS. 2015. Motivations of publics: The power of Antecedents in the Volunteer-Non-profit organisation relationship in *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of*

- public relations*, edited by EJ Ki, JN Kim & JA Ledingham. New York, NY: Routledge. 144-158.
- Botan CH & Hazleton, V. 1989. *Public relations theory*. Hillside, New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum associates.
- Botan, C, & Hazleton, V. 2006. *Public Relations Theory Two*. Mahwah, New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Botan, CH. & Hazleton, V. 2006. Public relations in a new age, in *Public Relations Theory II*, edited by CH Botan & V Hazleton. Mahwah, New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1-18.
- Botan, CH. 1993. Introduction to the paradigm struggle in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 19(2) 107-110.
- Botan,C. 1992. International public relations: Critique and reformulation. *Public Relations. Review*, 18(2), 149-159.
- Botta, RA. 2007. Measurement in public relations, in *Handbook of research on electronic survey and measurement*, edited by RA Reynolds, R Woods, & JD Baker. Hershey, PA: Idea Group Reference.
- Bowen, SA .2013. 'Symmetry', in *Encyclopaedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath, Thousand Oaks, Calif, Sage. 904-905, (Accessed 12 September 2016), doi: 10.4135/9781452276236.n491.
- Bowen, SA 2013, 'Excellence theory', in *Encyclopaedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath , Thousand Oaks, Calif, Sage. 324-326. Accessed 12 September 2016), doi: 10.4135/9781452276236.n491.
- Bowen, SA, Rawlins, B. & Martin, T. 2012. *Mastering Public Relations*. <http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/catalog/editions/bowen-mastering-public-relations-1-0> (Accessed 24 October 2014)
- Braun, SL. 2007. The Effects of the Political Environment On Public Relations in Bulgaria, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(3) 199-228
- Breton, G & Cote, Louise. 2006 Profit and legitimacy of the Canadian banking industry. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 18(4) 512-539.
- Bright, MA. & O'Connor, D. 2007. Qualitative Data Analysis: Comparison Between Traditional and Computerized Text Analysis. *The Osprey Journal of Ideas and Inquiry*. All Volumes (2001-2008). Paper 21. http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ojii_volumes/21 (Accessed 24 October 2014).
- Brønn, PS. 2007. Relationship outcomes as determinants of reputation. *Corporate Communication: An international Journal*. 12(4): 376-393.

- Brooks, R. & Walls, VL. 2008. *Open systems*.
http://www.westbrookstevens.com/open_system.htm, (Accessed 2 February, 2016)
- Broom, G., Casey, S., Ritchey, J. 2000. Toward a concept and theory of organisation-public relationship: An update, in *public relations as relationship management: a relational approach to public relations*, edited by JA Ledingham & SD Bruning, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 3-22.
- Broom, GM, Casey, S, & Ritchey, J. 1997. Toward a concept and theory of organization-public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 9(2), 83- 98.
- Broom, GM., & Dozier, DM. 1990. *Using research in public relations: Applications to program management*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Broom, M, & Sha, B. 2012. *Cutlip & Center's Effective Public Relations*. 11th edition. Harlow, Pearson.
- Brown, HI. 1977. *Perception, theory and commitment: the new philosophy of science*. Chicago: university of Chicago press.
- Browning, N. 2010. *Beyond Excellence theory: a critical examination of the Grunigian model*. Master's dissertation. Georgia: University of Georgia.
https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/browning_nicholas_201005_ma.pdf (Accessed 2 February, 2016)
- Bruning, SD.& Ledingham, JA. 1999., Relationships between organizations and publics: development of a multi-dimensional organization-public relationship scale, *Public Relations Review*, 25 (2) 157-70
- Brunner, B. 2000. *Measuring students' perception of the University of Florida's commitment to public relationships and diversity*. Doctoral dissertation. Gainesville: University of Florida.
https://archive.org/stream/measuringstudent00brun/measuringstudent00brun_djvu.txt (accessed 5 March 2018).
- Burger, M. 2009. Businesses' social involvement through public relations: A critical comparison of market-oriented and reflective paradigms of public relations, *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, 35(1), 101-118, DOI: 10.1080/02500160902906687
- Burnard, P., Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, K., & Chadwick, B. 2008. Analysing and presenting qualitative data. *British Dental Journal* 204 (8): 429-432
- Burson, H. 2011. Harold Burson's Blog. *Public Relations Defined*. <http://www.burson-marsteller.com/harold-blog/public-relations-defined/> (accessed 02 April 2018)

- Bütschi, G. & Steyn, B. 2006. Theory on strategic communication management is the key to unlocking the boardroom. *Journal of communication management*, 10(1):106-109
- Butterick, K. 2011. *Introducing public relations: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
- Cambridge Advanced Learners dictionary. *Framework*:
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/framework> (accessed 10 June 2018)
- Center, AH & Jackson, P. 1995. *Public relations practices: Management case studies and problems*. 5th edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Center, AH. Jackson, P, Smith, S, & Stansberry, FR. 2014. *Public relations practices: Managerial case studies and problems*. 8th edition. New York, NY: Pearson.
- Chandler, CS. 2014. *Exploring the relevance of relationship management theory to investor relations*. Master's dissertation. Oregon: University of Oregon
https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/17932/Chandler_oregon_0171N_10910.pdf;sequence=1(accessed 02 April 2018)
- Chartered Institute of Public Relations. 2011. *Research, Planning and Measurement Toolkit*. 3rd edition, www.cipr.co.uk/sites/default/files/Measurement%20March%202011.pdf (accessed 16 April 2018)
- Chartered Institute of public relations. 2015. *Google analytics for public relations measurement and evaluation*. <https://www.cipr.co.uk/content/policy/toolkits-and-best-practice-guides/google-analytics> (accessed 2 May 2018)
- Chen, N. 2004. Effective public affairs in China: MNC-government bargaining power and corporate strategies for influencing foreign business policy formulation. *Journal of Communication Management*, 8 (4), pp. 395–413.
- Chen, N., & Culbertson, HM. 1992. Two contrasting approaches of government public relations in Mainland China. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 37(3), 36–41
- Cheney, G. & Christensen, LT. 2001. Public relations as contested terrain: A critical response, in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage:167-182.
- Chmielecki, M. 2012. Public relations in Asia. *Journal of intercultural management*. 4(4): 135-142.
- Cho, J. & Trent, A. 2006. Validity in qualitative research revisited in *Qualitative Research*, 6(3)319- 340. Sage Publications.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794106065006>

<http://www.sagepub.com/drewstudy/pdf/Cho.pdf> (Accessed 15th November 2014).

Christians, CG. 2004. Ubuntu and communitarianism in media ethics. *Ecquid Novi* 25(2):235-256.

Chudinova, E. 2015. Communication intersection- Journalist and spokesperson, in *Current issues of science and research in the global world*, edited by V Kunova & M Dolinsky, Balkema. CRC Press. 171-176.

Clear, A. & Weideman, L. 2007. *Dynamics of public relations and journalism: A practical guide for media studies*. 2nd edition. Lansdowne, Juta.

Commission on Public Relations Education. 2006. *Public Relations Education for the 21st Century: the professional Bond*.

http://www.commpred.org/_uploads/report2-full.pdf (Accessed 1st December 2014)

Coombs, T. 2000. Crisis Management: Advantages of a relational Perspective, in *Public relations as relationship management*, edited by JA Ledingham & SD Bruning. Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 73-93.

Coombs, T., & Heath, RL. 2006. *Today's public relations*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. Sage Publications.

Craig CE. 2013. *The handbook of communication and corporate reputation*. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell

Creswell, J. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing among Five Traditions*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oak, Calif: sage publications.

Creswell, J. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 4th edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif.. Sage Publication.

Creswell, JW. & Miller, D.L. 2000. Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 3;9(3): 124-130, DOI: 10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2

Creswell, JW. 2008. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Cropp, F, & Pincus, J. 2001. The mystery of public relations: Unraveling its past, unmasking its future, in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath and G Vasquez. , Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 189-205., doi: <http://0-dx.doi.org.oasis.unisa.ac.za/10.4135/9781452220727.n13> (Accessed on 4th August 2014).

- Crouch, M & McKenzie, H. 2006. The logic of small samples in interview based qualitative research. *Social Science Information*. 45(4), 483-499.
- Culbertson, HM., & Chen, N.(eds). 1996. *International public relations: A comparative analysis*. Marwah, NJ: Routledge:
- Curtin, PA & Gaither, TK. 2007. *International public relations: negotiating culture, identity, and power*. Thousand Oaks, Calif, Sage Publication.
- Cutlip, SM, Center, AH, & Broom, GM. 2000. *Effective Public Relations*. 8th edition. New Jersey, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Daugherty, E .2001, 'Public relations and social responsibility', in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, Calif,: Sage Publication. 389-402, (accessed 24 April 2018) doi: 10.4135/9781452220727.n31.
- Daymon, C. & Holloway, I. 2002. *Qualitative research methods in public relations and marketing communications*. New York,NY:.. Routledge.
- Daymond, C & Holloway, I. 2011. *Qualitative research methods in public relations*. 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.
- De Beer, A. & Merham, G. 2004. Public relations in South Africa: a communication tool for change, in *Towards the common good: perspectives in international public relations*, edited by D Tilson & E Alozie, Boston, MA. Allyn & Bacon, 320 – 340
- DE BEER, E. 2008. *Global opinions on public relations and its impact on society, from local perspectives: a collaborative blog*. <http://www.prconversations.com/?p=> (Accessed September 13th, 2016)
- De Beer, E. Steyn, B. & Rensburg, R. 2013. The Pretoria school of thoughts: from strategy to governance and sustainability, in *Public Relations and communication management: current trends and emerging topics* edited by K Sriramesh, A Zerfass, & JN Kim. New York, NY: Routledge. 303-323.
- De Beer, E., 2001. *The perception of top communicators of senior management's expectations of excellent communication in South African companies*, Master's Dissertation, Pretoria: University of Pretoria
- De Chernatony, L & Cottam, S. 2006. Why are all financial services brands not great? *The Journal of Brand Management*, 15(2), 88-97.
- DeMarrais, K. 2004. Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience, in *Foundations for research*, edited by K. DeMarrais & SD Lapan. Mahwah, NJ : Erlbaum Associates. 51 – 68.
- Denzin, N. K. 1978. *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. 2005. Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research, in *Handbook of qualitative research* edited by NK. Denzin and YS. Lincoln, 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publication.
- Diamond, H. 2006. *The globalisation of PR: Myth or reality*.
<http://www.globalbydesign.com/2006/11/13/the-globalization-of-pr-myth-or-reality/> (Accessed 18th August, 2015)
- Diggs-Brown, B. 2011. *Strategic public relations: An audience-focused approach*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Domm, G. 2013. *Public relations in emerging nations: What do local practitioners themselves have to say?* <http://www.ipra.org/itl/05/2013/public-relations-in-emerging-nations-what-do-local-practitioners-themselves-have-to-say> (Accessed March 20th 2015)
- Dozier, D.M., 1992. The organizational roles of communications and public relations practitioners, in *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, edited by JE Grunig. New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates: 327-355.
- Dozier, DM, & Broom, GM. 1995. Evolution of the manager role in public relations practice. *Journal of Public Relations Research*.7(1): 3-26.
- Dozier, DM. 1990. The innovation of research in public relations practice: Review of a program of studies. *Public Relations Research Annual*. 2(1-4), 3-18.
- Dozier, DM., Grunig, LA. & Grunig, JE., 2013. *Manager's guide to excellence in public relations and communication management*, digital edition New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dozier, DM., Grunig., JE & Grunig, LA 1995. *Manager's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dozier. DM & Ehling, WP. 1992. Evaluation of public relations programs: what the literature tells us about their effect, in *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, edited by JE Grunig. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 159-184.
- Du Plessis, DF. 2000. *Introduction to public relations and advertising*. Cape Town. Juta
- Du Plooy, G.M. 2009. *Communication Research: Techniques, Methods and Approaches*. 2nd edition. Wetton, Cape Town. Juta.
- Du Plooy, G.M. 2001. *Communication Research: Techniques, Methods and Approaches*. 1st edition. Lansdowne, Juta..

- Duncan, T. (2008). *Principles of Advertising and IMC*. 2nd edition. London: McGraw Hill,
- Dutta MJ & Kumar, R 2015. Culture-centred approach to public relations resistance in relational context, in *Public Relations As Relationship Management: A Relational Approach To the study and practice of public relations*, edited by EJ Ki, JN Kim & JA Ledingham. New York, NY: Routledge 258-278
- Edwards, L. 2006. Public relations theories – an applied overview: systems theories in exploring *public relations*, edited by R Tench & L Yeoman. Harlow: Prentice Hall. 166-179.
- Ehling, WP, White, J. & Grunig, JE. 1992. Public relations and marketing practices, in *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, edited by JE Grunig. Hillside, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 357-394.
- Ehling, WP. 1992. Estimating the value of public relations and communication to an organization, in *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, edited by JE Grunig. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 617-638
- Everett, T. & Steyn, B., 2006. *Defining the core elements of management in the public relations context in South Africa: an international comparative study*. Paper presented at the 8th Annual EURPRERA Conference, Carlisle, UK, 06–09 September 2006.
- Falconi, M. 2011. *Personal influence model*. <https://instituteforpr.org/personal-influence-model/> (accessed 16 June 2018).
- Fawkes, J. 2012. Public relations and communication, in *The public relations handbook*. 4th edition, edited by A Theaker. New York, NY: Routledge: 21-37.
- Ferreira, EM. 2003. *Vocationally-oriented public relations education in globalised contexts: an analysis of South African technikon-level public relations education*. Doctoral dissertation. Rand Afrikaans University. <https://ujdigispace.uj.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10210/479/PhDCorrectPrefaceEFerreira.pdf?sequence=11> , (Accessed 10 July 2015)
- Fieseler, C., Lutz, C., & Miriam Meckel , M. 2015. An inquiry into the transformation of the PR roles' concept. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 20(1) 1-25 (Accessed 21st January, 2016) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-02-2014-0013>
- Fitch, K & Surma, A. 2006. *Challenges for public relations: working in an international framework*. Paper read at Australia and New Zealand Communication Association International Conference, Adelaide, South Australia, July 4-7. <http://www.anzca.net/documents/2006-conf-papers/198-challenges-for-public-relations-working-in-an-international-framework-1.html?path=2006-conf-papers> (Accessed 20th July, 2015)

- Flick, U. 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*. 4th edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Fourie, P.J. 2008. Ubuntuism as a framework for South African media practice and performance: Can it work? *Communicatio* 34(1):53-79.
- Franklin, B, Hogan, M & Langley, Q. 2009. *Key concepts in public relations*, the sage key concepts series. London: Sage Publications
- Franklin, B, Hogan, M, Langley, Q, Mosdell, N, & Pill, E. 2014, Globalisation, in *Key concepts in public relations*. The Sage key concepts series, London: Sage publications. 95-96
- Franklin, B, Hogan, M, Langley, Q, Mosdell, N, & Pill, E. 2014, Sampling, In *Key concepts in public relations*. The Sage key concepts series, London: Sage Publications, 206-209.
- Freitag, A. & Stokes, AQ. 2009. *Global Public Relations: Spanning borders, spanning cultures*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Galletta, A. 2013. *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: from research design to analysis and publication*. New York, NY: University press.
- García EG., & Garraza, TS. 2010. Making things happen: the role of communication in strategic management A case study on banking industry. *COMUNICACIÓN Y SOCIEDAD*, 23(2) 179-201. http://www.unav.es/fcom/communication-society/es/articulo.php?art_id=368, (Accessed 15 February 2016)
- Ghana Export Promotion Council. 2015. *Doing Business in Ghana*. <http://www.gipcghana.com/invest-in-ghana/doing-business-in-ghana.html> (Accessed 31st August, 2015).
- Ghana Statistical Service. September 2013. *Quarterly Gross Domestic Product* . http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/PPI%20Release_pdf/ppi_newsletter_sept2013.pdf. (Accessed 31st August, 2015)
- Given, LM, & Saumure, K. 2008, Population, in *the sage encyclopaedia of qualitative research*, by LM Given (ed). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage: 643-644.
- Goes, JM. & Simon, MK. 2011. *Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations*, <http://dissertationrecipes.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/limitationscopedelimitation1.pdf> (Accessed on 27th August 2014)
- Golafshani, N. 2014. Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research, *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4): 597-607, <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-4/golafshani.pdf> (Accessed on 13th August 2014).
- Gower, KK. 2006. Public relations research at the crossroad", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18(2):177-90.

- Grammer, EM. 2000. *Global and local characteristics of excellent international public relations programs: A content analysis of Fortune 500 Web sites*. Unpublished manuscript, College Park: University of Maryland.
- Gravetter, FJ & Forzano, LB 2009. *Research studies for behavioral sciences*. 3rd edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Gravetter, FJ & Forzano, LB 2012. *Research studies for behavioral sciences*. 4th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Gregory, A. 2000. Systems theories and public practice. *Journal of Communication Management*. 4(3) 266 – 277.
- Gregory, A. 2002. *To Spin or Not to Spin? The ethics of public relations*. Lecture at the Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Public Relations.
http://www.proi.com/Public/resources/published-articles/2/to_spin_or_not_to_spin___the_ethics_of_public_relations
 (Accessed on 2nd May, 2015).
- Gregory, A. 2004. Public relations and management, in *The public relations handbook*, edited by A Theaker. 2nd edition, New York, NY:Routledge. 48- 65.
- Gregory, A. 2004. *Public relations in practice* (ed). London: Kogan Page.
- Gregory, A. 2006. Management and organisation of Public relations, in *Exploring public relations*, edited by R Tench & L Yeomans. Harlow: Prentice Hall. 18-33
- Gregory, A. 2010. *Planning and managing public relations campaign: a strategic approach*, 3rd edition. London: Kogan Page.
- Gregory, A. 2016. PR as a management function, in *The public relations handbook*, 5th edition. Edited by A. Theaker. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Grix, J. 2010. *The Foundations of Research* 2nd edition. New York, NY: Palgrave,
- Grunig JE & Grunig LA. 2000. Public Relations in Strategic Management and Strategic Management of Public Relations: theory and evidence from the IABC Excellence project. *Journalism studies*, 1(2): 303-321
- Grunig JE & Grunig LA. 2013. The relationship between public relations and marketing in excellent organisations. Evidence from the IABC STUDY. In *public relations and communication management: current trends and emerging topics*, edited by K. Sriramesh, A. Zerfass & JK Kim. New York, NY: Routledge. 53-78
- Grunig JE. 2015. Forward, in EJ Ki, JN Kim, & JA Ledingham (eds.), *Public relations as relationship management. A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge. xxiii-xxvii.

- Grunig, J. 2001, 'Two-way symmetrical public relations: past, present, and future', in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath & G Vasquez. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 11-30 (Accessed September 8th, 2016) doi: 10.4135/9781452220727.n1.
- Grunig, J. 2011. Public relations and strategic management: Institutionalizing organisation-public relationships in contemporary society. *Central European Journal of Communication* 4(1), Spring 11- 31
- Grunig, J. E. 2008. Conceptualising quantitative research in public relations, in *Public relations metrics: Research and evaluation*, edited by B Van Ruler, AT Verčič, & D Vercic, New York, NY: Routledge.88-119.
- Grunig, JE & Grunig LA. 2008. Excellence theory in public relations: past, present and future, in *Public relations research: European and international perspectives and innovations*, edited by A. Zerfass, B. Van Ruler & K. Sriramesh. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. 327-347.
- Grunig, JE. (ed). 1992. *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grunig, JE. & Grunig LA. 1992. Models of public relations and communication, in *Excellence in public relations and communications management*, edited by JE Grunig. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 285-326
- Grunig, JE. & Haung, Y. 2000. From organizational effectiveness to relationship indicators: antecedents of relationships, public relations strategies, and relationship outcomes, in *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations*, edited by JA Ledingham, & SD Bruning Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 23-53.
- Grunig, JE. & Hunt, T. 1984. *Managing public relations*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Grunig, JE. & White, J. 1992. The effect of worldviews on public relations theory and practice, in *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, edited by JE. Grunig. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 31-64.
- Grunig, JE. 1989. Symmetrical presuppositions as a framework for public relations theory, in *Public relations theory*, edited by CH Botan & V Hazleton, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 17-44.
- Grunig, JE. 1993. Image and substance: From Symbolic to Behavioural Relationships. *Public Relations Review* 19(2) 121-136.
- Grunig, JE. 1994. World View, Ethics, and the Two-Way Symmetrical Model of Public Relations, in *Normative Aspekte der Public Relations*, edited by W Armbrrecht & U Zabel. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. 69-89.

- Grunig, JE. 2001. *A General theory of public relations: A theoretical framework for practicing the profession*. <http://www.prconversations.com>. (Accessed 20 March 2015)
- Grunig, JE. 2001. *The role of public relations in management and its contribution to organizational and societal effectiveness*: http://www.instituteforpr.org/files/uploads/2001_PRManagement.pdf (Accessed March 5th, 2016)
- Grunig, JE. 2006. Furnishing the edifice: Ongoing research on public relations as a strategic management function. *Journal of Public Relations research*, 18(2): 151-176.
- Grunig, JE. 2008. Excellence theory in public relations, in *The international encyclopedia of communication*, by W Donsbach (ed), 1620-1622. doi:10.1002/9781405186407.wbiece047 http://www.communicationencyclopedia.com/public/book.html?id=g9781405131995_yr2013_9781405131995 (Accessed on 25th July 2014).
- Grunig, JE., & Grunig, LA. 2011. Characteristics of excellent communication, in *The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication: A Guide to Internal Communication, Public Relations, Marketing, and Leadership*, edited by TL Gillis. <https://www.safaribooksonline.com/library/view/the-iabc-handbook/9780470894064/ch001-sec006.html> (accessed 13 May 2018)
- Grunig, JE., & Grunig, LA. 2011. Public relations excellence 2010. *Journal of Professional Communication* 1(1):41-54, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254626778> (accessed 15 June 2018).
- Grunig, JE., 2002, '*Qualitative methods for assessing relationships between organizations and publics*, http://www.instituteforpr.org/iprwp/wpcontent/uploads/2002_AssessingRelations.pdf (Accessed 27 January 2016)
- Grunig, JE., Grunig, LA., & Dozier, DM. 2006. The Excellence Theory. *Public Relations Theory II*, 2nd edition. Edited by CH Botan & V Hazelton. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 21-62.
- Grunig, JE., Grunig, LA., Sriramesh, K, Huang, Y. & Lyra, A. 1995, "Models of Public Relations in an International Setting", *Journal of Public Relations Research*. 7(3):163-186. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249873665_Models_of_Public_Relations_in_an_International_Setting (Accessed 25th August 2014)
- Grunig, LA, Grunig J. & Dozier, D. 2009. The excellence theory, in *Public relations theory II*, edited by CH Botan and V Hazleton, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah: New Jersey. 19-54.

- Grunig, LA. 1992. Strategic public relations constituencies on a global scale. *Public Relations Review*. 18: 127-136.
- Grunig, LA., Grunig, JE. & Dozier, DM. 2002, *Excellent Public Relations and Effective Organisations – A study of communication management in three countries*, New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grunig. JE & Repper FC. 1992. Strategic management , publics and issues. in *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, edited by JE Grunig. New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates:117-158.
- Grunig.JE & Grunig LA. Conceptual differences in public relations and marketing: the case of health-care organisations. *Public relations review*, 17(3):257-278.
- Guest G., Bunce A., & Johnson, L. 2006. How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82.
- Guillemin M & Gillam L. 2004. Ethics, Reflexivity, and Ethically Important Moments in Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10 (2) :261-280.
- Gupta, C & Bartlett, JL. 2007. Guanxi, astrology and symmetry: Asian business and its impact on public relations practice. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 8(1): 1-18.
- Gupta, C. & Bartlett, JL. 2007. *Practicing Public Relations in the Global Community of the 21st Century – A Comparison Of Business Practices And Culture In Three World Regions*. Paper read at the WCA 2007 Conference, Brisbane, Australia July 27-28, 2007.
facstaff.uww.edu/.../23%20Chandani%20Gupta%20Jennifer%20Bartlett.... (Accessed 29 September 2013).
- Halff, JG & Anne, G. 2014. Towards an historically informed Asian model of public relations. *Public Relations Review*.40(3), 397-407.
- Hall, J. 2005. Re-establishing trust in financial services. *Journal of Brand Management*, 12(4) 232-235.
- Hallahan, K. 2013. Integrated marketing communications. In *Encyclopedia of public relations*, 2nd edition, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage:457-460.
- Hammersley, M. & Traianou, A. 2012. *Ethics in qualitative research: controversies and context*. Thousand Oak, Calif. Sage Publications.
- Hart, JL .2013.Culture', in *Encyclopedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 240-243
- Harwell, MR. 2011. Research Design in Qualitative/Quantitative/Mixed Methods, in *the SAGE Handbook of research in education: Pursuing Ideas as the*

Keystone of Exemplary Inquiry , edited by CF Conrad and RC Serlin.
Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 147 – 182

Heath, RL & Coombs, WT. 2006, *Today's public relations: An introduction*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. (Accessed 3 February 2016) doi: 10.4135/9781452233055.

Heath, RL & Vasquez, G 2001(eds), 'Defining the discipline', in *Handbook of public relations*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage publications:1-10,

Heath, RL . (ed). 2013. Antecedents of modern public relations, in *Encyclopedia of public relations*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 30-33.

Heath, RL. (ed). 2005, 'Mutually beneficial relationships', in *Encyclopaedia of public relations*, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage: 553-557.

Hess-Biber, SN. 2010. *Mixed methods research: merging theory with practice*. New York, NY: Guilford press.

Hesse-Biber, SN. 2016. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publication

Hjørland, B. 2005b. Library and information science and the philosophy of science. *Journal of documentation* 61(1):5-10.

Hoepfl, M.C. 1997. Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education research. *Journal of Technology Education* 9(1):47 -63

Holmes, S. 2004. Intermezzo: the reflective paradigm of public relations, in *Public relations and communication management in Europe: A nation by nation introduction to public relations theory and practice*, edited by Van Ruler, B & Vercic, D., Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter: 121-134.

Holmström, S. 2005. Reframing public relations: the evolution of a reflective paradigm for organizational legitimization. *Public Relations Review*, 31:497-504.

Holtzhausen DR, Petersen, BK, & Tindall, NTJ. 2003. Exploding the Myth of the Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Dichotomy: Public Relations Models in the New South Africa, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 15(4), 305-341, DOI: 10.1207/S1532754XJPRR1504_02 (Accessed March 4th, 2014)

Holtzhausen DR. & Verwey, S. 1996. Towards a general theory of public relations. *communicare*. 15(2). 25-56

Hon LC, & Grunig, JE. 1999. *Guidelines for measuring relationships in public relations*. http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines_Measuring_Relationships.pdf (Accessed 5 April 2016)

- Hon., L. & Brunner, BR. 2000. Measuring public relationships among students and administrators at the University of Florida. *Journal of communication management* 6(3)227-238.
- Huang YH. 1997. *Public relations strategies, relational outcomes, and conflict management strategies*. Doctoral dissertation. College park: university of Maryland.
- Huang, Y.-H. 2000. The personal influence model and gao guanxi in Taiwan Chinese public relations. *Public Relation Review* 26(2), 219-236.
- Huang, YH. 2001. OPRA: A cross-cultural, multiple-item scale for measuring organisation-public relationships. *Journal of public relations research*. 13: 61-90.
- Hugman, R. 2014. Social work research and ethics, in *the SAGE handbook of social work research*, edited by I Shaw, K Briar-Lawson, J Orme, & R Ruckdeschel. London: Sage. 149-164, doi: <http://0-dx.doi.org.oasis.unisa.ac.za/10.4135/9780857021106.n10>. (accessed 14 August 2014)
- Huitt W 2011. Analysing paradigms used in education and schooling. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. From < <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/intro/paradigm.pdf>.> (Accessed March 14, 2016)
- Hung, CJF. & Chen, YR. 2004. Glocalization: Public relations in china in the era of change, in *Public relations in Asia. An anthology*, edited by K Sriramesh. Wadsworth: Singapore: 29–62.
- Hung, CJF. 2002. *The interplay of relationship types, relationship cultivation, and relationship outcomes: how multinational and Taiwanese companies practice public relations and organisation-public relationship management in China*. Doctoral dissertation. College park: university of Maryland.
- Hung, CJF. 2004. Cultural influences on relationship cultivation strategies: multinational companies in China. *Journal of communication management*. 8(3) 264-281
- Hung, CJF. 2006. Towards the theory of relationship management: how to cultivate quality relationships?, in *the future of excellence in public relations and communication management: challenges to the next generation*, edited by EL Toth. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: 443-476.
- Hung-Baesecke CF, & Chen, RY. 2013. The effects of organisation-public relationship types and quality on crisis attributes, in *Public relations and communication management: current trends and emerging topics*, edited by K Sriramesh, A, Zerfass & JN Kim, NY: New York, NY: Routledge: 225-243.

- Hutton, J. 2007. Defining the future of Public Relations. *Sphera Pública*, núm., Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia España. 7: 45-63
<http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/297/29720421004.pdf> (Accessed March 18th, 2014).
- Hutton, JG. 1999. The definition, dimensions and domain of Public Relations. *Public Relations Review*. 25(3): 199-214.
- ISSER. 2014. *Overview: Global Economic developments and Ghana's economic performance*. http://isser.edu.gh/files/Press_Kit.pdf. (Accessed 31st August, 2015).
- Jeffrey, A. 2013. *Social Media Measurement: A Step-by-Step Approach Using the AMEC Valid Metrics Framework*. <https://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Social-Media-Measurement-Paper-Jeffrey-6-4-13.pdf>, (accessed 16 April)
- Jiang, J. 2002. *Linking East with West: Websites as a Public Relations Tool for American and Chinese Banks Operating in a Culturally-Evolving Chinese Society*. Master's dissertation, Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-07092002-201906/unrestricted/pdf> (Accessed 14th July, 2014)
- Jo, S. & Kim, Y. 2004. Media or personal relations? Exploring media relations dimensions in South Korea. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 81(2): 292-306
- Johnson, B & Christensen, L. (eds.). 2008. *Educational research: quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Johnston J. 2007. *Media relations: issues and strategies*. Crows Nest NSW: Allen & unwin.
- Johnston, J, & Zawawi, C. (eds).2009. *Public relations: theory and practice*. Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin
- Johnston, J. 2016. *Public relations and the public interest*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jones, ML. 2007. Using software to analyse qualitative data, *Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research*, 1(1), 2007, 64-76.
- Joppe, M. 2000. *The Research Process*. <http://www.ryerson.ca/~mjoppe/rp.htm> (Accessed 10 November, 2014)
- Joseph, A. 2017. *7 Problems Facing Public Relations Practice In Africa* <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/7-problems-facing-public-relations-practice-africa-dr-ajihson> (accessed 30 April, 2018)

- Jourdi, DR. 2007. *Public relations in Puerto Rico: An exploratory qualitative study*. Master's Thesis. University of South Florida.
<http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/2233/>. (Accessed on 20th July, 2015).
- Jugenheimer, DW., Bradley, SD., Kelley, L. D., & Hudson, JC. 2014. *Advertising & public relations research*. 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Karlberg, M. 1996. Remembering the public in public relations research: From theoretical to operational symmetry. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 8(4), 262-278.
- Keenan, KL. 2009. Public relations in Egypt: Practices, obstacles and potentials, in *Global Handbook of Public Relations: Theory research and Practice*, edited by K Sriramesh & D Verčič. New York, NY: Routledge: 393 - 412.
- Kenny J. 2016. Excellence theory and its critics: a literature review critiquing Grunig's strategic management of public relations paradigm. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*. 17 (2):78-91
- Kent, M. & Taylor, M. 2011. How intercultural communication theory informs public relations in global settings, in *Public relations in global cultural contexts: Multi-paradigmatic perspectives*, edited by N Bardham & CK Weaver. London: Routledge: 50-77.
- Ki , EJ., & Hon LC. 2006. Relationship maintenance strategies on fortune 500 company websites. *Journal of communication management*. 10(2): 27-43.
- Ki, EJ, & Hon, LC. 2007. Testing the linkages among the organization-public relationship and attitude and behavioural intentions. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(1): 1-23.
- Kiambi, D. (2014). 'Kenya' in *Middle Eastern and African Perspectives on the Development of Public Relations: Other voices*, edited by T Watson. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: 67-82.
- Kiambi, DM. & Nadler, MK. 2012. Public relations in Kenya: An exploration of models and cultural influences. *Public Relations Review*, 38(3): 505-507.
- Kiambi, DM. 2010. *Public Relations in Kenya: An Exploration of Public Relations Models and Cultural Influence*. Master's dissertation. Miami: Miami University.
- Kim, Y & Hon, LC. 1998. Craft and Professional Models of Public Relations and Their Relation to Job Satisfaction Among Korean Public Relations Practitioners. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 10(3): 155-175
- Kim, Y. 2009. Professionalism and diversification: the evolution of public relations in South Korea, in *Global public relations handbook*, edited by K Sriramesh & D Večič. New York, NY: Routledge: 149-164.

- Kim, Y., & Hon, L. C. (1998). Craft and professional models of public relations and their relation to job satisfaction among Korean public relations practitioners. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 10(10): 155–175
- Kitchen, P.J., & Moss D. 1995. Marketing and public relations: the relationship revisited, *Journal of Marketing Communications*. 1(2):105-106
- Koper, C, Babayeale, T, & Jahansoozi, J. 2009. Public relations practice in Nigeria, in *Global Handbook of Public Relations: Theory research and Practice*, edited by K Sriramesh & D Verčič. New York, NY: Routledge: 312-330.
- Kothari, CR. 2004. *Research methodology: methods and techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International Limited.
- Kudzodzi, W. 2017. *Ghana's PR evolution: From errand boy to professional practitioner*. <https://www.prweek.com/article/1419321/ghanas-pr-evolution-errand-boy-professional-practitioner> (accessed April 2018).
- Kunczik, M. 1994. Public relations: Angewandte Kommunikationswissenschaft oder ideologie? Ein Beitrag zur ethic der öffentlichkeitsarbeit (Public relations: applied communication science or ideology? A contribution to the ethics of public relations), in *Normative aspects der public relations*, Westdeutscher, edited by W Armbrrecht. & U Zabel, Opladen: 225-64.
- L'Etang, J, & Pieczka, M (eds). 2006. *Public Relations: Critical Debates and Contemporary Practice*. New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- L'Etang, J. 2008a. Writing PR history: Issues, methods and politics. *Journal of Communication Management* ,12(4), 319–335.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13632540810919783>
- L'Etang, J. 1996. Public relations as diplomacy, *In Critical Perspectives in Public Relations*, edited by J L'Etang & M Pieczka, London: International Thomson Business Press: 14-34.
- L'Etang, J. 2006. 'Corporate responsibility and public relations ethics, in *Public relations: critical debates and contemporary practice*, edited by J. L'Etang & M. Pieczka. New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: 405-422.
- L'Etang, J. 2008. *Public Relations: Concepts, Practice and Critique*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Lamb, LF, & McKee, KB. 2005. *Applied Public relations: Cases in stakeholder management*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Lamb, LF, & McKee, KB. 2009. *Applied Public relations: Cases in stakeholder management*. 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge,

- Laskin, AV. 2009. Evolution of models of public relations: an outsider's perspective. *Journal of communication management*. 13(1): 37-54.
- Laskin, V.2012. Public relations scales: advancing the excellence theory. *Journal of Communication Management*, 1(6) 4: 355-370.
- Latham, JR. 2014. *Qualitative sample size- How many participants are enough?* <http://johnlatham.me/many-participants-enough/> (Accessed 2nd March, 2017).
- Lattimore, D., Baskin, O., Heiman, S. T., Toth, E. L., & Van Leuven, J. K. 2004. *Public Relations: The profession and the practice*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Lavrakas, PJ (ed.) 2008. *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications:
- Le Roux, T. 2010. *Contribution of South African corporate communication practitioners to organisational performance*. Doctoral Thesis, Potchefstroom: North-West University.
- Le Roux, T. 2013. An exploration of the role of communication during the in-crisis situation. *JàMbá: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*, 5(2): 1-9 . doi:10.4102/jamba.v5i2.67 (Accessed September 13, 2016)
- Ledingham JA, 2003. Explicating relationship management as a general theory of public relations. *Journal of public relations research*, 15(2): 181–198.
- Ledingham, JA & Bruning, SD. 2001. Community relations, in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 527-534. (Accessed on 2nd April 2016) doi: 10.4135/9781452276236.n421.
- Ledingham, JA 2013, 'Relationship management theory', in *Encyclopedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage: 782-784, (Accessed on 2nd April 2016) doi: 10.4135/9781452276236.n421.
- Ledingham, JA, Bruning, SD, Thomlison, TD, & Lesko, C. 1997. The applicability of the interpersonal relationship dimensions to an organizational context: Toward a theory of relational loyalty; a qualitative approach. *Academy of Managerial Communication Journal*, 1(1): 23-43.
- Ledingham, JA. & Bruning, SD. 1998. Relationship management in public relations: dimensions of an organization-public relationship. *Public relations review*, 24(1):55-56.
- Ledingham, JA. & Bruning, SD. 2000a. Introduction: background and current trends in the study of relationship management, in *Public relations as relationship management: a relational approach to the study and practice of public relations*, edited by JA Ledingham, & SD Bruning Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. xi-xvii.

- Ledingham, JA. 2003. Explicating relationship management as a general theory of public relations, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 15(2): 181-98.
- Ledingham, JA. 2006. Relationship management: a general theory of public relations, in CH Botan CH & V Hazleton, (ed.) *Public relations theory II*. NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 412-428.
- Leeper, R 2001, 'In search of a metatheory for public relations: an argument for communitarianism', in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publication: 93-104, doi: 10.4135/9781452220727.n6. (Accessed 9 March 2016)
- Leggetter, B. 2015. *Barcelona Principles: launch of the Barcelona principles 2.0*. <https://instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Barcelona-Principles-2.0.pdf>, (accessed 1 May 2018)
- Leitch, S & Neilson, D 2001, 'Bringing publics into public relations: new theoretical frameworks for practice', in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath & G Vasquez , Thousand Oaks, Calif, Sage Publications:127-138, (Accessed 13 February 2016) doi: 10.4135/9781452220727.n9.
- Leonard, A. & Ströh, U. 2000. Transcending diversity: the communication manager as ethical / moral ombudsperson in the postmodern organisational setting. *Communicare*, 19(2):34-50.
- Lewis, F. 2003. Design issues, in *qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers*, edited by J Ritchie & J Lewis. Thousand Oaks, Calif. Sage publication . 77-108
- Lichtman, M. 2013. *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif. Sage Publications
- Likely, F. 2009. A different Country, a different Public Relations: Canadian PR in the North American context, in *Global Handbook of Public Relations: Theory research and Practice*, edited by K Sriramesh & D Verčič , New York, NY. Routledge: 715 -739.
- Likely, F., & Watson, T. 2013. Measuring the edifice: Public relations measurement and evaluation practices over the course of 40 years, *Current trends and emerging topics in public relations and communication management*, edited by K. Sriramesh., A. Zerfass & J. Kim. New York, NY: Routledge: 143–162.
- Lim, S. Goh, J. & Sriramesh, K. 2005. Applicability of the generic principles of excellent public relations in a different cultural context: The case study of Singapore. *Journal of Public Relations Research*. 17(4): 315-340

- Lincoln, Y S., & Guba, EG. 2000. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences , in *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd edition, edited by NK Denzin & Y S Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage: 163 – 188 .
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. 1981. *Effective evaluation: Improving the usefulness of evaluation results through responsive and naturalistic approaches*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications
- Lindenmann, WK. 2006. *Public relations research for planning and evaluation*. <http://www.instituteforpr.org/pr-research-for-planning-and-evaluation/> Accessed on 29 September 2015)
- Lindlof, T. R. (1995). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Lyra, A. 1991. *Public relations in Greece: Models, roles and gender*. Master's dissertation. College Park: University of Maryland.
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., McQueen, KM., Guest, G. & Namey, E. 2005. *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide*, North Carolina, Family Health International.
- Mackey, S. 2003. Changing vistas in public relations theory, *PR-ism*. 1(1): 1-9. <http://www.praxis.bond.edu.au/prism/papers/refereed/paper3.pdf> (Accessed on 20th March, 2014).
- Mackey, S. 2009. Public relations theory, in *Public relations: Theory and practice*, edited by J Johnston & C Zawawi, 3rd edition. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin
- Macnamara, J. (2014). *The development of international standards for measurement and evaluation of public relations and corporate communication: A review*. Report for the Australian Centre for Public Communication, University of Technology Sydney, November. <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/acpc-pr-measurement-and-evaluation-review.pdf> (Accessed on 3rd March, 2018)
- Macnamara, J. 2009. Public relations in an interactive age: the need for new practices, not just new media. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 10: 1-15. <https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/11851/1/2008008323.pdf> (Accessed 24 May 2018)
- Macnamara, J. 2015. Breaking the measurement and evaluation deadlock: A new approach and model. *Journal of Communication Management*, 19(4), 371-387, doi: 10.1108/JCOM-04-2014-0020

- Macnamara, JR. 2008. *Research in public relations: a review of the use of evaluation and formative research*. http://www.carma.com/research/PR_Metrics.pdf (accessed 02 April 2018)
- Mahler, D. 1996. *"Think global, act local": The public relations activities of German companies in the United States*. New York: GACC Publication Services.
- Manuela, AW. 2007. The financial sector and economic development: banking on the role of human capital. *Journal of public and international affairs*. 18(9):189-203.
- Marsh, C .2010. Precepts of Reflective Public Relations: An Isocratean Model. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(4): 359-377
- Marshall, C, & Rossman, GB. 2011. *Designing Qualitative Research*. 5th edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications Inc.
- Mason, M. 2010. Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Qualitative social research*. 11(3). <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1428> (accessed 20th August, 2014).
- Mbeke, PO. 2009. Status of public relations in Kenya, in *Global Handbook of Public Relations: Theory research and Practice*, edited by K Sriramesh & D Verčič. Routledge: 331-354.
- McCoy, M., & Hargie, O. 2012. Measurement and evaluation, in *The public relations handbook*, edited by A Theaker. 4th edition. New York, NY: Routledge: 195-218.
- Mcelreath, M, Chen, N, Azarova, L, & Shadrova, V. 2001. The development of public relations in China, Russia, and the United States, in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath, & G Vasquez. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, Inc: 665-75, doi: <http://dx.doi.org.oasis.unisa.ac.za/10.4135/9781452220727.n60>. (Accessed on 8th August 2015,
- McPhee, R. 2000. Paradigm critique: How to see our task as common, and how to work on it, in *Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground*, edited by SR Corman & MS Poole. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.
- Mehta, AM. & Xavier, RJ. 2009. Public relations management in organisations, in *An Introduction to Public Relations : from Theory to Practice*, edited by J Chia & G Synnott, South Melbourne: Australia: Oxford University Press: 190-221.
- Merriam, SB. 2009. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mersham G. & Skinner, C. 2009. The nature and practice of public relations practice in Africa, in *The global public relations handbook: theory research and*

practice. Expanded and revised edition, edited by K Sriramesh and D Vercici. New York, NY: Routledge:284-311

Mersham GM., Rensburg, R. & Skinner, C. 1995. *Public relations, development and social investment: A southern African perspective*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Mersham, G., Skinner, C. and Rensburg, R. 2011. Approaches to African communication management and public relations: a case for theory-building on the continent. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 11(4): 195–207.

Mersham, GM. and Skinner, JC. 2001. *New insights into communication and public relations*. Sandton: Heinemann.

Michaelson, D., & Stacks DW. 2014. *A professional and practitioner's guide to public relations research, measurement and evaluation*. 2nd edition. New York, NY: Business Expert Press, LLC.

Michaelson, D., & Stacks, DW. 2011. Standardization in public relations measurement and evaluation. *Public Relations Journal*, 5(2): 1–22.

Ming- Yi, W & Baah-Boakye, K. 2009. Public relations in Ghana, work-related cultural values and public relations model. *Public Relations Review*, 35(1): 83-85.

Ming-Yi, W. & Baah-Boakye, K. 2008. *Public Relations in Ghana: professionalism and impacts on Globalisation*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the NCA 94th Annual convention, TBA, Chicago, IL.
http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p256370_index.html (Accessed 15th December 2013).

Ming-Yi, W. & Baah-Boakye. 2008. A Profile of Public Relations Practice in Ghana: Practitioners' Roles, Most Important Skills for Practitioners, Relationship to Marketing, and Gender Equality. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 52 (1): 30-36.

Molleda, JC. & Moreno, A. 2008. Balancing public relations with socioeconomic and political environments in transition: comparative, contextualized research of Colombia, Me´xico and Venezuela. *Journalism and Mass Communication Monographs*, 10(2): 116-74

Molleda, JC. 2000. *Integrative public relations in international business: The impact of administrative models and subsidiary roles*. A doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Molleda, JC. 2008. Contextualized qualitative research in Venezuela: coercive isomorphic pressures of the socioeconomic and political environments on public relations practices. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20(1): 49-70.

Molleda, JC. 2009. *Global public relations*. white paper for the Institute for Public Relations. <http://www.instituteforpr.org/topics/global-public-relations>. (Accessed on August 6th, 2015).

- Molleda, JC., & Moreno, A. 2006. The transitional socioeconomic and political environments of public relations in Mexico. *Public Relations Review*, 32(2): 104-109.
- Moloney, K. 2004. Debate papers: democracy and public relations", *Journal of Communication Management*, 9(1): 89-92.
- Morgan, DL. 2008. Sample, in *the sage encyclopaedia of qualitative research methods*, edited by LM Given & K Saumure. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage publication: 797-798.
- Morley, M. 2002. *How to manage your global reputation: A guide to the dynamics of international public relations*. 2nd edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMilan.
- Morse, JM. Barrett, M. Mayan, M. Olson, K. & Spiers, J. 2002. Verification: strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 1(2): 1-19.
http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/1_2Final/pdf/morseetal.pdf
(accessed 14 August 2014).
- Moss, D. & DeSanto, B. 2011. *Public Relations: A Managerial Perspective*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Moss, D., Warnaby, G. & Newman, AJ. 2000. Public relations practitioner role enactment at the senior management level within UK companies', *Journal of Public Relations Research* 12(4): 277–307.
- Motion, J & Leitch, S 2001, 'New Zealand perspectives on public relations', in RL Heath & G. Vasquez *Handbook of public relations*, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 659-664.
- Moyer, J. 2011. *Global Public Relations*. <http://www.instituteforpr.org/global-public-relations/>. (accessed 1st December, 2014)
- Murphy, P .1991. The Limits of Symmetry: A Game Theory Approach to Symmetric and Asymmetric Public Relations. *Public Relations Research Annual*, 3(1-4): 115-131, DOI: 10.1207/s1532754xjpr0301-4_5
- Musa, AI. 2013. Understanding the intersections of paradigm, meta-theory, and Theory in Library and Information Science Research: A social constructionist perspective. *Samaru Journal of Information studies*. 13(1&2): 41-48.
- Mykkänen, M., & Vos, M. .2015., The contribution of public relations to organizational decision making: Insights from the literature. *Public Relations Journal*, 9(2): <http://www.prsa.org/Intelligence/PRJournal/Vol9/No2/>, (accessed 24 May 2018)

- Nabukeera, Y. 2006. *An analysis of the roles of public relations practitioners in Kampala, Uganda*. Master's Dissertation. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa.
- Nagy, S, Biber, H, & Leavy, P. 2011. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publication
- Natalie TJ. Tindall, NTJ., & Holtzhausen D. 2012, Toward an integrated model of communication: the case of South Africa. *Journal of Communication Management*, 16(4):371 - 387
- Natifu, B & Zikusooka, A. 2014. Ubuntu, professionalism, activism and the rise of public relations in Uganda. In *Pathways to Public Relations: Histories of practice and profession*, edited by B St. John III, MO Lamme & J L' Etang, London: Routledge: 224-238.
- Natifu, B. 2014. Uganda, in *Middle Eastern and African Perspectives on the Development of Public Relations: Other voices*, edited by T Watson. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: 138-152.
- Nawaf, A. 2014. *Public relations practice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates: western theory, local culture*. A Doctoral thesis. London: University of West London. <https://repository.uwl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1273/> (Accessed 24 August 2017)
- Nessman, K. 1995. Public Relations in Europe: A comparison with the United States. *Public Relations Review* 21(2): 151-160.
- Newsom, D. and Haynes, j. 2008. *Public relations writing: form & style*. 8th edition. Belmont, CA. Wadsworth.
- Newsom, D., Turk, JV., & Kruckeberg, D. 2010. *This is PR: The realities of public relations*. 10th edition. Boston, MA. Wadsworth.
- Newsom, D., Turk, JV., & Kruckeberg, D. 2013. *This is PR: realities of public relations*. 11TH edition. Boston, MA. Wadsworth
- Ni, L. 2006. Relationships as organisational resources: Examining public relations impact through its connection with organisational strategies. *Public relations Review*, 32 (3):276-281
- Ni, L. 2009. Strategic role of relationship building: perceived links between employee-organisation relationships and globalisation strategies. *Journal of public relations research*. 21(1):100-200
- Nkem, J., Ilyamabo, J., & Otubanjo, O. 2013. Examining the Internet as a Strategic Corporate Communication Tool in Public Relations Practice. *Business and Management Horizons*. 1(2): 1-17.

- Odedele, S. 2004. Public relations and communication management in Africa. <http://prforafrica.org/prcomm.pdf> (accessed 23rd November 2014).
- Okereke, M. 2002. Public relations growth in developing countries. *Paper presented at the IPRA conference, Jun Marriot Mirage City Gold Resort Hotel, Caire, Egypt. October 13-15.*
- Otchere-Daflagbe, K. 2009. *Public Relations Practice In Ghana – A review using the International Association of Business Communication (IABC's) Excellent Public Relations and Vercic et. al. (1996) Global Public Relations theory* <http://21stcentury-communications.blogspot.com/2009/10/public-relations-practice-in-ghana.html> (Accessed 30th September 2013)
- Padida, T. 2010. *Beyond press clippings: meaningful PR measurement.* <https://www.iabc.com/beyond-press-clippings-meaningful-pr-measurement/> (accessed 25 April 2018)
- Papasolomou, J., Vrontis, D., & Thrassou, A. 2014. Marketing public relations: A consumer-focused strategic perspective. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 13(1):5-24
- Pasadeos, YR. Renfro, B & Hanily, ML. 1999. Influential Authors and Works of the Public Relations Scholarly Literature: A Network of Recent Research, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 1(11): 29-52.
- Patton, M. Q. 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication
- Patton, MQ. & Cochran, M. 2002. *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology*. Medecins Sans Frontiers. https://evaluation.msf.org/sites/evaluation/files/a_guide_to_using_qualitative_research_methodology.pdf (Accessed on 4th March 2016)
- Peräkylä, A. 2011. Validity in research on naturally occurring social interaction, In *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, 3rd edition, edited by D. Silverman, London: Sage Publications: 365–82.
- Petersen, BK., Holtzhausen, DR. & Tindall, NTJ. 2002. *Marching in Lockstep: Public Relations Roles in the New South Africa*. A paper submitted to the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications Annual Convention, Miami, Florida, August 2002.
- Petersone, B. 2004. *The status of public relations in Latvia*. Master's dissertation. College Park: University of Maryland. <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/2125> (Accessed 5 May 2018)
- Phillips, D. & Young, P. 2009. *Online public relations: a practical guide to developing an online strategy in the world of social media*. London: Kogan page.

- Phillips, EM. & Pugh, D S. 2005. *How to get a PhD: a handbook for students and their supervisors*. 4th edition. Berkshire: Open University.
- Pieczka, M. 1995. *Symmetry in communication and public relations*", paper presented at the 2nd International Public Relations Symposium, Bled, July, Slovenia
- Pieczka, M. 2006. Paradigms, systems theory and PR, in *Public Relations: Critical Debates and Contemporary Practice*, edited by J L'Etang & M Pieczka. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: 331-58
- Plowman, KD 2013. Systems theory, in *Encyclopedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 906-908.
- Pooi Yin, P., Krishnan, K., & Ean, CLC. 2012. Evaluation research on public relations activities among public relations practitioners in Malaysian corporations: An exploratory study. *The Journal of South East Asia Research Centre for Communication and Humanities*, 4(1): 41–46.
- Pratt, C. B. and Okigbo, C., 2004. Applying reconstructed and social responsibility theories to foreign direct investment and public relations for social change in sub-Saharan Africa, In *Toward the Common Good: Perspectives in International Public Relations*, edited by DJ. Tilson & EC. Alozie, Boston, Mass: Alyn & Bacon: 271–40.
- Pratt, C., & Ugboajah, FO. 1985. Social responsibility: A comparison of Nigerian public relations with Canadian and U.S. public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 9: 22–29
- Price Water HouseCoopers. March 2014., *Growth accelerated: doing business and investing in Ghana*. http://www.pwc.com/en_GH/gh/assets/pdf/doing-business-in-ghana-2014.pdf. (Accessed 31st August, 2015).
- Pritchard, BJ., Ahles, CB. & Bardin, N. 2005. *Public relations practices in France compared to the United States*. 8th international public relations research conference proceedings. South Miami, Florida march 10 -13. https://instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2005_IPRRC_Proceedings.pdf (accessed on 4th August, 2015)
- Public Relations Society of America (USA). *Communicating Public Relations' Value Business Value and Public Good are Essence of PR Today*. http://www.prsa.org/Intelligence/BusinessCase/Communicating_Public_Relations_Value#.VEPgcvl_vwk. (accessed 24 October 2014)
- Raaz, O., & Wehmeier, S. 2011. Histories of public relations. *Journal of Communication Management*, 15(3) 256 – 275 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13632541111151014> (Accessed August 5th, 2016)

- Rawjee, VVD & Gqamane, Z. 2013. The practice of public relations within selected organisations in Durban. *South African Journal of Business Management*. 6(26): 7745-7749.
- Reber, B H 2013. Advocacy. in, *Encyclopedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publication:15, (24 April 2018), doi: 10.4135/9781452276236.n10.
- Reddi, CVN. 2009. *Effective public relations and media strategy*. New Delhi: PHI Learning private Limited.
- Rensburg, R. 2007. Communications Management in the Africa Context: Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*. 1(1): 37-51
- Rensburg, R. 2008. Public relations research and evaluation in Africa, in *Public relations metrics: Research and evaluation*, edited by B van Ruler and D Vercic, New York, NY: Routledge: 52-263.
- Rensburg, R. 2009. Public relations in South Africa: From rhetoric to reality, in *Global public relations handbook: Theory, research and practice, Expanded and revised edition*, edited by K Sriramesh & D. Vercic. New York, NY: Routledge: (355-392).
- Rhee, Y. 2002. Global Public Relations: A Cross-Cultural Study of the Excellence Theory in South Korea. *Journal of Public Relations Research*. 14(3): 159-184.
- Rhee, Y. 2004. *The employee-public –organisation chain in relationship management: a case study of a government organisation*. Doctoral thesis, Maryland: University of Maryland, College Park.
http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2003_Rhee.pdf (Accessed 25th July 2015).
- Richards, L & Morse, JM. 2012. *README FIRST for a User's Guide to Qualitative Methods*. 3rd edition. Thousands Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Richie, J, Lewis, J. & Elam, G. 2003. Designing and selecting samples, in *qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers*, edited by J Ritchie & J Lewis. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage publication: 77-108.
- Rioux, K. 2010. Metatheory in library and information science: a nascent social justice approach. *Journal of education for library and information science*. 51(1). 51(1): 9–17
- Ritzer, G. (Sa). *Metatheory*.
http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/beos_metatheory (Accessed 8 April 2016)

- Ritzer, G. 2004. *The globalization of nothing*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publication.
- Rodik, P. & Primorac, J. 2015. To Use or Not to Use: Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software Usage among Early-Career Sociologists in Croatia. *Forum: qualitative social research*.
<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2221/3759>
 (Accessed 27th December 2016)
- Rovai, AP. Baker, JD. Ponton, MK. 2014. *Social Science Research Design and Statistics: A Practitioner's Guide to Research methods and IBM SPSS statistics*. Chesapeake, VA: watertree press LLC.
- Rubin, RB, Rubin, AM, Haridakis, PM, & Piele, LJ. 2010. *Communication research: Strategies and sources*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Sahin J. 2015. *Five communication trends in the financial services industry*.
<http://www.edelman.com/post/five-communications-trends-financial-services-industry/> (Accessed 15 February 2016)
- Sallot, LM & Lyon, LJ., Acosta-Alzuru, C. & Jones, KO. 2003, From aardvark to zebra: a new millennium analysis of theory development in public relations academic journals. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 15(1) 27-90.
- Samsup, J. 2003. *Measurement of organization-public relationships: Validation of measurement using a manufacturer-retailer relationship*. A Doctoral thesis. Florida: University of Florida. <https://institute-for-pr.org/wp-content/uploads/Measurement-of-Organization-Public-Relationships.pdf>
 (accessed 10 May 2015)
- Sandin, D. & Simolin, T. 1995, *Public Relations as perceived and practiced by commercial Banks*. A Master's thesis, Lulea University of Technology, Sweden. <http://epubl.ltu.se/1402-1552/2006/008/LTU-DUPP-06008-SE.pdf>
 (Accessed 14th July 2014).
- Scott, CD. & Jaffe, DT. 1995. *Managing Change at Work*, Revised edition. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications
- Scriven, C. 2002. Marketing public relations (MPR): a critical perspective of current literature. *Communicare*. 21(2):30-41
- Seale, C. 1999. Quality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(4): 465-478.
- Seale, C. 2005. Using computers to analyze qualitative data, in *Doing qualitative research*, edited by D Silverman. London: Sage Publications.
- Seale, C. 2013. Using computers to analyze qualitative data, in *Doing qualitative research* edited by Silverman, D. 4th edition. London: Sage Publications .264-276

- Sefotho, MM. 2015. A Researcher's Dilemma: Philosophy in Crafting Dissertations and Theses. *Journal of social science*, 42(1, 2): 23-36
- Seitel, F. 2007. *The practice of public relations*. 10th edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Shamoo, A.E. & Resnik, D.B. 2009. *Responsible conduct of research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- SHARPE, ML. 2000. Developing a behavioural paradigm for the performance of public relations. *Public relations review*, 26(3):345-361.
- Shaw, J. & Shaw, P. 2005. Stakeholder relationships in Canada: In partnership with community, in *Handbook of Public Affairs*, edited by CS Fleisher & P Harris. London: Sage Publications.
- Shenton, AK. 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information* 22: 63–75
- Shin, JH., & Cameron, GT. 2003. Informal relations: A look at personal influence in media relations. *Journal of Communication Management*, 7(3): 239-254.
- Sieber, JE. 1992. *Planning Ethically Responsible Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications
- Silverman, D. 2013. *Doing qualitative research*. 4th edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage publication.
- Skinner, C. & Mersham, G. 2009. The nature and status of public relations practice in Africa, in *Global Handbook of Public Relations: Theory research and Practice*, edited by K Sriramesh & D Verčič. New York, NY: Routledge: 284-311.
- Skinner, JC .2013, 'Africa, practice of public relations in' *Encyclopedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication: 16-19,(accessed 24 April 2018), doi: 10.4135/9781452276236.n11.
- Skinner, JC, Von Essen, LM, Mersham, GM, & Motau, SJ. 2007. *Handbook of public relations*. Cape Town: OUP.
- Skinner, JC. 1994. *Public relations and communication theory, with special reference to corporate social investment*. A Master's dissertation. University of Zululand.
<http://uzspace.uzulu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10530/508/Public%20relations%200%26%20communication%20theory.%20J.C.%20Skinner.pdf?sequence=1>,
 (Accessed 15 January 2015)
- Smith D. 2008. *Becoming a public relations writer*. 2nd edition. Mahwah, NJ. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Smith RD. 2011: Systems Theory & Public Relations:
<http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/smithrd/PR/systems.htm> (Accessed 15 January 2016)
- Smith RD. 2017. *Strategic planning for public relations*. 5th edition. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Smith, RD. 2008. *Public Relations History*.
<http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415994224/publicrelationshistory3.asp>
 . (Accessed August 13, 2016).
- Smith, RD. 2013. *Public relations: The Basics*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Somfai, R.2009. *Revisiting the Personal Influence Model as an Ethical Standard in Public Relations Theory and Practice*. Master's dissertation. Provo: Brigham Young University. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/2437> (accessed 16 June 2018).
- Spicer, C. 1997. *Organisational public relations: a political perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum associates
- Spicer, C. 2009. *Organizational Public Relations: A Political Perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Sriramesh, K & Vercic, D. 2007. Introduction to this special section: The impact of globalization on public relations. *Public Relations Review*. 33(4): 355-359.
- Sriramesh, K. & Vercic, D. 2002. International public relations: a framework for future research. *Journal of Communication Management*, 6(2): 103-117.
- Sriramesh, K. & Verčič, D. 2009. A theoretical framework for global public relations research and practice, in *The global public relations handbook*, edited by K Sriramesh & D verčič. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum: 1–24.
- Sriramesh, K. & Vercic, D. 2012. *Culture and public relations: Links and implications*, New York, NY: Routledge
- Sriramesh, K. 1999. The models of public relations in India. *Journal of Communication Management*, 4(3): 225-239
- Sriramesh, K. 2008. Globalisation and Public Relations. *Public Relations Research. European and International Perspectives and Innovations*. Weisbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden: 409 – 425.
- Sriramesh, K. 2009. Globalisation and public relations: The past, present, and the future. *PRism* 6(2):1-11. http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism_on-line_journ.html (Accessed 25th August 2014)

- Sriramesh, K. 2009. Public relations: an industry in transition, in *The Global Public Relations Handbook: Theory, Research, and Practice* edited by K Sriramesh and D Verčič. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sriramesh, K. 2009. The Relationship Between Culture and Public Relations, in *The Global Public Relations Handbook, Theory, Research, and Practice*, edited by K Sriramesh & D Vercic. New York, NY: Routledge: 52 - 67
- Sriramesh, K. 2010. Globalisation and Public Relations: Opportunities for growth and reformulation, in *The Sage handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 691 – 708.
- Sriramesh, K. and Enxi, L. 2009. *Public Relations Practices and Socio-economic Factors: A Case Study of Different Organisational Types in Shanghai*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Sheraton New York, New York City, NY May 25th. http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p12486_index.html (Accessed 25th April 2014).
- Sriramesh, K., & Vercic, D. 2009. *The global public relations handbook: theory research and practice. Expanded and revised edition*. Routledge. NY, New York.
- Sriramesh, K., & White, J. 1992. Social culture and public relations, in *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, edited by JE. Grunig. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc 597–614).
- Sriramesh, K., & Verčič, D. 2002 International public relations: A framework for future research, *Journal of Communication Management*, 6(2)103-117. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13632540210806973> (accessed 24 April 2018)
- Sriramesh, K., Grunig, JE & Dozier, DM. 2009. Observation and Measurement of Two Dimensions of Organizational Culture and Their Relationship to Public Relations, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 8(4): 229-261, DOI: 10.1207/s1532754xjpr0804_02
- Sriramesh, K., Kim, Y., & Takasaki, M. (1999). Public relations in three Asian cultures: An analysis. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 11, 271–292
- Sriramesh, K., Zeffass, A., & Kim, JN (eds). 2013. *Public relations and communication management: Current trends and Emerging topics*. New York, NY: Routledge: 178-192.
- Stacks, DW. 2011. *Primer of public relations research*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Stacks, DW., & Bowen, SA. (eds.) .2013. *Dictionary of Public Relations Measurement and Research*. <http://www.instituteforpr.org/dictionary->

publicrelations-measurement-research-third-edition/.(accessed 25 November, 2015)

Starčić, E., & Jakopović, H. 2016. Evaluation and measurement among Croatian public relations professionals. *Communication Management Review*, 1(2): 42–59.

Steiner, CJ. 2001. How important is professionalism to corporate communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 6(3), 150-156

Stenbacka, C. 2001. Qualitative research requires quality concepts of its own. *Management Decision*, 39(7): 551-555.

Steyn, B & Puth, G. 2000. *Corporate communication strategy*. Sandown: Heinemann. 187-188.

Steyn, B 2005. Africa, practice of public relations, in *Encyclopedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 16-8,

Steyn, B. & Butschi, G. 2003. *Reflective public relations: A commentary on conceptual and empirical similarities and differences between south African roles research and European reflective research*. paper delivered in the special session titles: Reflection as a Key Concept in Communication Management” at the 10th International Public Relations Research Symposium, Lake Bled from 3-6 July.

Steyn, B. & Green, M. 2001. Investigating strategic management roles of the corporate communication function in the Department of Housing. *Communicare*. 20(2): 1-35

Steyn, B. & Puth, G. 2000. *Corporate communication strategy*, Heinemann, Sandown.

Steyn, B. 2000a. *Strategic management roles of the corporate communication function*. A Master's thesis. University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Steyn, B. 2000b. 'CEO expectations in terms of PR roles', *Communicare* 19(1): 20–43.
[http://www.repository.up.ac.za/dspace/bitstream/handle/2263/6205/Steyn_CEO\(1999\).pdf?sequence=1](http://www.repository.up.ac.za/dspace/bitstream/handle/2263/6205/Steyn_CEO(1999).pdf?sequence=1) (Accessed September 20th, 2016).

Steyn, B. 2004. A metaphorical application of the concept of paradigm to the public relations domain. *Communicare* 23(1): 54-78

Steyn, B. 2007. Contribution of public relations to organisational strategy formulation, in *The future of excellence in public relations and communication*

management: challenges for the next generation, edited by EL Toth..
Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: 137-172.

Steyn, B. 2009. The strategic role of public relations is strategic reflection: A south African research stream. *American behavioural scientists* (53): 516-532

Steyn, B., & Everett. 2009. International comparative study indicates different PR roles in South Africa and the UK, using the same measuring instrument. *Tripodos*, Numero, 24, Barcelona, 2009.

Steyn, B., 2000a. The South African CEO's role expectations for a public relations manager *paper presented at the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Educators Academy Public Relations Research Conference*, Miami, 31 March to 02 April.

Stone, J.D. 2004. *International PR: emerging challenges for the 21st century*. Proceedings of the International Public Relations Research Conference "Globalisation: challenges and opportunities for public relations. South Miami, Florida, 11-14. Institute of Public Relations, UK.
http://www.instituteforpr.org/wpcontent/uploads/2004_IPRRC_Proceedings.pdf (Accessed November 29th, 2014)

Sue, VM., & Ritter LA. 2012. *Conducting online surveys*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage publications

Suls, J. & Rothman, A. 2004. Evolution of the Biopsychosocial model: Prospects and Challenges for Health psychology. *Health Psychology* 23(2):119-25.

Suppe, F. 1977. *The structure of scientific theories*. 2nd edition. Baltimore: University of Illinois press.

Sutton, CN & Jenkins, B. 2007. *The role of the financial services sector in expanding economic opportunity*. Economic Opportunity Series. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University.

Szabo G. 2014. GOVCOM 2.0: The role of Web 2.0 in communicating EU presidency, in *media and communication in Europe*, edited by A Stępińska. Logos Verlag, Berlin GmbH, 113 – 130

Szondi, G. 2006 International context of public relations. In *Exploring Public Relations*, edited by R Tench & L Yeomans. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd. 112-139

Taylor, M, & Kent, M. 1999. Challenging assumptions of international public relations: when government is the most important public. *Public Relations review*. 25(2): 131 – 144.

- Taylor, M. 2000a. Cultural variance as a challenge to global public relations: A case study of the Coca-Cola scare in Europe. *Public Relations Review*, 26(3): 277-293.
- Gregory, A. 2017. Strategic public relations planning and management, in *Exploring public relations*, edited by R Tench & L Yeomans. Harlow: Pearson Education. 168-195
- Tench R., & Yeomans, L. 2009. (eds.). *Exploring public relations*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Tench, R., D'Artey, M., & Fawkes, J. 2009. Role of public relations practitioner, in *Exploring public relations*, edited by R Tench & L Yeomans. Harlow: Pearson Education:35-66.
- Therkelsen, D., Fiebich, C., Groehler, K., Freeman, Bl, Piltingsrud, B, Hutton, JG., et al 2008. *Reputation management: conflicting expectations between public relations practitioners and top management*, (working paper).
- Thomas, A. 2006. *Research concepts for management studies*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Thurlow, A. 2015. a critical historiography of public relations in Canada: rethinking an historical symmetry, in *The Routledge Companion to Management and Organizational History*, edited by PG McLaren, AJ Mills, TG Weatherbee - New York, NY: Routledge: 302-316
- Tilson, DJ. 2014. An alternative view of social responsibility: the ancient and global footprint of caritas and public relations, in *Pathways to public relations: histories of practice and profession*, edited by B St. John III. Lamme, MO., & L'Etang, J. New York, NY: Routledge: 56-74
- Toth, EL. 2000. From personal influence to interpersonal influence: A model for relationship management, In, *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations*, edited by JA Ledingham & SD Brunig. Marwah, NJ: Erlbaum: 202-221
- Toth, EL., 2001. How feminist theory advanced the practice of public relations, in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 237-246.
- Tricia, HH. 2013. Lobbying, in *Encyclopaedia of public relations*, edited by RL Heath. Thousand Oaks, California: Calif: Sage Publications: 520-522.
- Trochim, WM. 2006. *The research methods knowledge base*, 2nd Edition. <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/> (Accessed 6 April 2016).

- Tsestura, K. 2009. The development of public relations in Russia: A geopolitical approach, In *Global Handbook of Public Relations: Theory research and Practice*, edited by K Sriramesh & D Verčič. New York, NY: Routledge: 655-576.
- Tucci, PA. 2017. *The handy geography answer book*. 3rd edition. Canton, Visible ink.
- Turk, JV & Scanlan, LH. 2004. *The evolution of public relations: Case study from countries in transition*. 2nd edition, Gainesville, Fla.
http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Int_CaseStudies.pdf.
 (Accessed July 20th, 2015)
- Turner, WD. III. 2010. Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3): 754-760
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR15-3/qid.pdf> (Accessed on 25th June, 2014).
- Uduji, JI. 2013. Public Relations for Improving Public Perception of the Marketing Executives in the Banking Industry in Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*. 4(8): 76-83.
- Valentini, C.2007. Global versus cultural approaches in public relationship management: the case of the European union. *Journal of communication management*. 11(2): 117-133
- Valentini, C.2016. 'Book Review: Ki, E.-J.; Kim, J.-N., & Ledingham, J. A. (2015). Public relations as relationship management. A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations. 2nd edition. Routledge. *Journal of Communication*, vol. 66(1):15-18
- Van Heerden, G. & Rensburg R. 2005. Public relations roles empirically verified among public relations practitioners in Africa. *Communicare*, 24(1):69-88.
- Van-Heerden, G, 2004. *The Practice of Public Relations in Africa: A Descriptive Study*. MCOMM Thesis. South Africa: University of Pretoria.
<https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/28138/05chapter5.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y> (accessed 24 August 2015)
- Van Leuven, J K, & Pratt, CB. 1996. Public relations' role: Realities in Asia and in Africa South of the Sahara, in *International Public Relations: A Comparative Analysis*, edited by HM Culbertson & N Chen . Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: 93-105
- Van Ruler, B & Verčič, D. 2004. Overview of public relations and communication management in Europe, in *Public Relations and Communication Management in Europe: A Nation-by-Nation Introduction to Public Relations Theory and Practice*, edited by B Van Ruler and D Verčič. New York,NY: Mouton de Gruyter Berlin: 1-12.

- Van Ruler, B. & Verčič, D. 2002. *The Bled manifesto on public relations*. Ljubljana: Pristop Communications. <http://prbooks.pbworks.com/f/Bled+Manifesto.pdf> (Accessed October 2nd, 2014)
- Van Ruler, B. & Verčič, D. 2005. Reflective Communication Management, Future Ways for Public Relations Research. *Annals of the International Communication Association*. 29(1): 239-274.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2005.11679049>
- Verčič, D, Van Ruler, B., Bütschi, G., & Flodin, B. 2001. On the definition of public relations: A European view. *Public Relations Review* 27(4): 373-387.
- Verčič, D, Zeffass, A & Wiesenbergr, M. 2015. Global public relations and communication management: A European perspective. *Public Relations Review*. 41(5): 785-793. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.06.017>. (accessed on July 16th, 2015).
- Verčič, D. 2000. The European public relations body of knowledge. *Journal of communication management*. 4(4). 341-354
- Verčič, D. 2013b. Intercultural and multicultural context of public relations, in *Exploring public relations*, edited by R Tench & L Yeomans, 3rd edition. London: Pearson Education
- Verčič, D., Grunig LA., & Grunig JE. 1996. Global and specific principles of public relations: Evidence from Slovenia, in *International public relations: A comparative analysis*, edited by H Culbertson & N Chen. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Inc. 31–65.
- Waddington, S. 2012. *Grunig revisited: digital communication and the Four Models of Public Relations*. <http://wadds.co.uk/2012/09/14/grunig-revisited-digital-communication-and-the-excellence-model/> (Accessed 10 January 2016)
- Waddington, S. 2013. *A critical review of the Four Models of public relations and the excellence theory in an era of digital communication*. <http://wadds.co.uk/2013/06/18/cipr-chartered-practitioner-paper-grunig-and-digital-communications/> (Accessed 15 October 2015)
- Waiyachote, P. 2007. *International public relations at top 50 global brands: A converged or diverged approach?* A Master's Thesis. Perley Isaac School of Journalism, University of West Virginia
- Wakefield, R 2001, Effective public relations, in *Handbook of public relations*, edited by RL Heath, & G Vasquez. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications: 639-49, doi: <http://0-dx.doi.org.oasis.unisa.ac.za/10.4135/9781452220727.n57>. (Accessed on 8th August 2015)
- Wakefield, R. 2008. Theory of International Public Relations, the Internet, and Activism: A Personal Reflection. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20(1), 138-157.

- Wakefield, RI. 1997. *International public relations: A theoretical approach to excellence based on a worldwide Delphi study*. A doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park.
- Wakefield, RI. 2000a. Preliminary Delphi research on international public relations programming: Initial data supports application of certain generic/specific concepts, in *Perspectives on public relations research*, edited by D Moss, D Verčič, & G Warnaby, London: Routledge: 179-208.
- Wakefield, RI. 2000. World-class public relations: A model for effective public relations in the multinational. *Journal of Communication Management*. 5(1): 59-71
- Walker, P. 2012. Public relations and globalisation, in *Public relations handbook*, edited by A Theaker, 4th edition. New York, NY: Routledge: 219-248.
- Wall, S. 2001. Winning the public relations battle. *Australian Banking & Finance*, 10(6): 3.
- Warnaby, G & Moss, D. 1997. the role of public relations in organisations in *public relations principles and practice*, edited by PJ Kitchen, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth: 6-21.
- Waterman, N. 2012. *An analysis of the communication practices of a financial advisory firm against Grunig's four models of PR*.
<http://www.cipr.co.uk/sites/default/files/Nicola%20Waterman's%20Critique.pdf>
 (Accessed 18 August 2014).
- Waters, DR. 2013. Applying public relations theory to increase the understanding of sports communication, in *Routledge handbook of sports communication*, edited by PM Pedersen, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Watson, T. & Zerfass A. 2011. Return on investment in public relations: a critique of concepts used by practitioners from communication and management science perspectives. *Prism*. 8(1). <http://www.prismjournal.org/homepage.html>.
 (accessed on 02 April 2018)
- Watson, T. 2011. *What does ROI mean*
http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/19071/1/Watson_%282011%29_What_does_ROI_mean_%28PRR%29_Accepted_Version.pdf (accessed 16 April 2018)
- Watson, T. 2012. A (very brief) history of public relations, in The story of PR.. *The communication director*. 42-45. <http://www.communication-director.com/issues/b2b-or-not-b2b/very-brief-history-pr#.V6iJsJXliSo>.
 (Accessed August 4th, 2016)
- Watson, T., & Noble P. 2007. *Evaluating public relations: A best practice guide to public relations planning, research and evaluation*. 2nd edition. London: Kogan Page.

- Watson, T & Noble, P. 2014. *Evaluating public relations*. 3rd edition. London: Kogan Page.
- Watson T. 2014. *Introduction to Middle Eastern and African Perspectives on the Development of Public Relations: Other Voices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: 1-4. 10.1057/97811374044299.0004.
- Watson, T., 2017. Public relations origins: definitions and history, in *Exploring public relations*, edited by R Tench & L Yeomans. Harlow: Pearson Education. 3-7.
- Weaver, C.K. 2011. Public relations, globalisation and culture: framing methodological debates and future directions in *Public Relations in Global Cultural Contexts: Multi-paradigmatic Perspectives*, edited by N Bardhan and CK Weaver, New York, NY: Routledge: 250-274
- White, J. & Dozier, DM. 1992. Public relations and management decision making, in *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, edited by JE Grunig. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 91-108.
- White, J. 1991. *How to understand and manage*. London: Business Books
- White, R. 2009. Research on communication for development in Africa: current debates. *African communication research*. 2(2): 203-52.
- Wiersman, W. 2000. *Research methods in education: an introduction*. Boston, MA, Allyn and Bacon
- Wilcox, DL. & Cameron, GT. 2012. *Public Relations strategies and tactics*. 10th edition. New York, NY: Pearson.
- Wilcox, DL. 2006. The Landscape of Today's Public Relations Global Public Relations. *Anlisi*, 34: 67-85.
www.raco.cat/index.php/Analisi/article/download/55444/64576 (Accessed 8 August, 2013).
- Wilcox, DL., Cameron, GT, Reber BH. 2015. *Public relations: strategies and tactics*. 11th edition. Harlow: Pearson.
- Willis, JW. 2007. *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretative and critical approaches*. SAGE publications. Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Wilson, D. 2008. Research on traditional communication in Africa: the development and future directions. *African Communication Research*, 1(1):47-59.
- Wimmer, RD. & Dominick, JR. 2011. *Mass Media research: An introduction*. 9th edition. Boston, MA. Wadsworth.
- Wood, BL. 2012. Biopsychosocial, in *Paradigms in theory construction*, edited by L L'Abate. New York, NY: Springer: 169-186.

- Worthington, N. 2011. Gender discourse and ubuntu media philosophy, *Journalism Studies*, 12(5), 608-623, DOI: 10.1080/1461670X.2010.545205.
- Wright, D., Leggetter, B., & Zerfass, A. 2009. *Global survey on communication measurement*. https://amecorg.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Global-Survey-Communications_Measurement-20091.pdf (accessed 02 April 2018)
- Wright, DK., & Hinson, MD. 2014. *Examination of Social and Emerging Media Use in Public Relations Practice: A Longitudinal Analysis Between 2006 and 2014* <https://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014WrightHinson.pdf> (16 accessed April 2018)
- Yang, A. & Taylor, M. 2014. A global perspective on public relations professionalism: mapping the structure of PR associations international network. *Journalism & Mass communication quarterly*, 91(3):508-529
- Yannas, P. 2006. *PR theory and education in the Age of Globalization*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Dresden International Congress Centre, Dresden, Germany Online <PDF. <http://www.interdisciplinary.net/ati/education/ioe/ioe4/yannas%20paper.pdf> (Accessed 30th November 2014)
- Yaxley, H. 2013. *Developing a worldview of public relations* <http://www.prconversations.com/2013/04/developing-a-worldview-of-public-relations/> (Accessed 4 January, 2016)
- Yudarwati, G. 2008. *Personal influence model of public relations: a case study in Indonesia's mining companies*. <http://www.instituteforpr.org/downloads/267> (Accessed August 2nd, 2014)
- Zerfass, A., Verčič D., Verhoeven, P., Moreno, A., & Tench R. 2015: *European communication monitor* - <http://www.communicationmonitor.eu/2015/06/13/ecm-european-communication-monitor-2015-communication-value-listening-messaging-measurement-content-marketing-excellence-strategic-communication/> (accessed May 24 2018)

ADDENDUM A: One-on-one Interview guide

Section A: General questions

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
 - a. Your full designation
 - b. How long you have been working as a PR/communication practitioner
 - c. Educational background –certificate, diploma, masters
 - d. Formal education in public relations?
 - e. Age
 - f. What, in your view, is the main purpose of public relations

Section B: Public Relations models (purpose of public relations)

These set of questions seek to determine the models upon which PR is conceptualised and practiced.

Press Agency/publicity

Can you tell me the main purpose of the PR/communication department?

How do you measure/evaluate success after a PR programme?

How will you react to the view that the success of any PR programme is based on the amount of publicity it receives?

Public Information

What role does media clippings play in the measurement of PR programme in your department?

what is your view on the assertion that practitioners tend to disseminate accurate information but keep unfavourable information from the public?

It has been suggested that practitioners serve as negotiators and mediators between management and publics rather than neutral disseminators of information; what are your views in relation to your work in this organisation?

In relation to what you do here, is the writing and production of stories for publication given a priority over research? please explain?

Two-way asymmetry

What is the position of the department concerning attitudinal research against the organisation and how the organisation might change it before organising any PR programme?

What is the role of the department in relation to persuading publics/stakeholders to act in line with organisational goals?

How do you evaluate the outcome of PR/communication programme? Is evaluative research a core part of what you do?

Two-way symmetry

What is the role of the PR department concerning the development of mutual understanding between the organisation and its publics/ key stakeholders?

How does the department use research (formal or informal) to determine the level of understanding between management and the publics about each other?

What would you say to the view that PR's purpose is to change behaviour and attitude of management and vice versa?

What is the role of the department in relation to conflict between the organisation and its stakeholders/publics?

Section C: Public Relations Roles (Activities)

This section will look at the activities currently performed by the PR/communication department of the organisation.

Technician role

How does the department organise its media relations activities?

Does part of your activities involve organising special events? Why or why not?

What is the role of your department regarding the production of audio-visual materials?

How do you project the activities of the organisation to the publics/stakeholders (e.g. writing articles for publication)?

How will you describe the role of the department regarding production of communication materials?

Managerial Role

How, if at all, are PR practitioners involved in strategic planning here?

What can you tell me about the place of PR within the organisational structure? Do you report to the CEO? Why or why not?

One of the key responsibilities of a PR practitioner is to explain to top management the impact of their behaviour on key publics. Is this the case in your situation?

In what ways do the department serve as an early warning systems to top management before issues become crisis.

What is the role of the department in the development of communication strategies to support corporate strategy?

How is the department involved in:

Community relations/ corporate social responsibility?

Internal communication

What other PR activities does the department engage in?

What role does the department play in terms of being an advocate for key publics?

How will you describe the department's role, if any, in initiating dialogue with special groups/ associations that limit the autonomy of the organisation?

What role does the department play in the implementation of communication strategies/ plans?

How does the department use research, if any, in its day to day activities?

Concluding questions

What, in your view, are some of the peculiar characteristics of the local PR industry? Do you see a difference in the way it is practiced as compared to more developed countries?

Do you suppose there are some political, cultural factors (collectivist, social responsibility/ interpersonal/communal, participatory approach - consultation/consensus) that affect PR practice in Ghana? if so, can you tell me about it?

What suggestions, if any, can you give to improve the way PR is practiced in Ghana?

Finally, can you tell me a little about the background of the PR/ communication department (set up, staff strength)?

Thank you

ADDEDUM B: Letter requesting permission to conduct research at the financial organisations

Pentecost University College
PO Box KN1739, Kaneshie
Accra – Ghana
Tel: 0244767223
Email: aanani-bossman@pentvars.edu.gh

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW

My name is Albert Anani-Bossman, a lecturer at the Pentecost University College, Sowutoum and a Communication Science student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am conducting a research for my Doctoral thesis (PhD) on the topic **“Developing a framework for public relations practice: A study of the financial services sector”**. The aim is to determine the nature of public relations/communication as practiced in Ghana by means of the models used (purpose) and roles (activities) performed. In essence it seeks to determine whether PR/communication is practiced in Ghana the same way as in the developed countries, what models (if any) are used in the practice of public relations/communications, do activities of practitioners reflect what is practiced in countries with well-developed PR/communication systems especially in the age of globalisation or there are other factors that are unique based on our culture, economic issues etc. The key outcome of the research is to gain insight into how PR/communication is practiced not only in Ghana but in Africa, especially as there is a paucity of literature on this subject. This will contribute to the body of knowledge on PR practice and further increase understanding of the unique features (or otherwise) that influences how communication is practiced in African countries. The findings will aid in the development of a framework that will guide the practice of PR in the financial services sector

I am hereby seeking permission to interview you as part of my research participants. The interview will be part of 22 other interviews that will be conducted with practitioners in the financial services sector.

Attached is an information sheet that gives details of the research and also addresses CONFIDENTIALITY and ETHICAL issues. There is also a consent form that both the participant and the researcher will sign before the interview takes place.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'A. Anani-Bossman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Albert Anani-Bossman

18 January 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES OF SELECTED ORGANISATIONS IN GHANA

We hereby request that you assist Mr. Albert Adjei Anani-Bossman (student number: 55716423) to collect relevant data as part of his PhD research project on the public relations activities of selected organisations in Ghana. The title of his study is "Developing a public relations framework for selected organisations in Ghana". The study will shed light on how the organisations use public relations to create and nourish stakeholder relationships. Significantly, the study will produce a public relations framework for the selected organisations.

Thank you very much for your anticipated support and co-operation.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Takalani Mudzanani
Supervisor
Department of Communication Science
Tel: 012 429 6025
E-mail: mudzate@unisa.ac.za



ADDEDUM C: consent information sheet and consent form



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Developing a Framework for Public Relations Practice: A Study of the Financial Services Sector

Dear Sir/Madam

Developing a Framework for Public Relations Practice: A Study of the Financial Service Sector

My name is Albert Anani-Bossman and I am doing research with Dr. Takalani Mudzanani, a Senior lecturer in the Department of Communication Science towards a Doctoral Degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Developing a Framework for Public Relations Practice: A study of the Financial Services Sector.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to find out how PR/communication practitioners in Ghana conceptualise and practice public relations in relation to the models (purpose) and roles (activities). The study will gain insight into how PR is practiced and the factors that influence such practice in a different cultural setting such as Ghana. This will contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject, especially from an African perspective. and the factors that influence

This study is expected to collect important information that would lead to the development of a framework that will shape how PR is practiced within the financial services sector.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been randomly selected as one of the participants in the study since you are the head of public relations/communication in your organisation. Again we believe that your experience in the field will lead to the provision of rich data that will shed light on how PR is practiced in Ghana, more so as the literature on this subject is lacking.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

Your role, should you choose to participate in this research, will be to provide the relevant information based on the questions asked and also allow the researcher to take notes as well as audio tape the interview. The audio taping will be for academic purposes only.

The questions will involve the purpose of PR practice as well as the various activities that you perform in the department. The interview will not require you to expose any strategic plans of your organisation so neither you nor the organisation will be at any risk.

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

One of the key benefits of this study is that you would have contributed immensely towards the growth of the body of knowledge on the subject, particularly from the perspective of a developing country such as Ghana. Also insight gained will be used to develop a framework that will guide the practice of public relations/ communication. your department/organisation can benefit from the result by using it to enhance organisational effectiveness.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

Responses will be kept confidential and at no time will your actual name or organisation be revealed. You will be assigned a random code to ensure this anonymity. The transcript of the interview will be kept pending the acceptance of my dissertation after which it will be destroyed.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

At no point will your name or that of your organisation be revealed. With the exception of the researcher and the supervisor, no one else will know of your identity or that of your organisation. No one will therefore be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

The result of the research may be used as the basis for journal articles or conference proceedings in the future. However, neither your name or information would be used in any of the publications

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at UNISA for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies of the transcripts will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

The research is voluntary and you will not be paid for the information. However, a copy of the key findings will be given to you upon request.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Albert Anani-Bossman on 0244767223 or aanani-bossman@pentvars.edu.gh

Should you require further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please do so on the above details.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr. Takalani Mudzanani. Tel: + 27124296025 or mudzate@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Anani-Bossman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Albert Anani-Bossman



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname.....

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....

Researcher's signature.....Date.....



ADDENDUM D: Ethical clearance certificate



College of Human Sciences
Department of Communication Science

24 May 2017

Reference number: 2017_CHS_Staff_CommSt_010

Proposed title: Developing a Framework for Public Relations Practice: A Study of the Financial Services Sector.

Principle investigator: Albert Anani-Bossman, Department of Communication Science

Approval status recommended by reviewers: Approved

The Ethics Review Committee of the Department of communication Sciences at the University of South Africa has reviewed the research proposal and considers the methodological, technical and ethical aspects of the study to be appropriate.

Albert is requested to maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from or about research participants, and maintain security procedures for the protection of privacy. The committee needs to be informed should any part of the research methodology as outlined in the Ethics application (Ref. Nr.2017_CHS_Staff_CommSt_003) change in any way.

It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Research Ethics Policy, which can be found at the following website:

http://staffcmsys.unisa.ac.za/cmsys/staff/contents/departments/res_policies/docs/Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20-%20rev%20appr%20-%20Council%20-%202015.09.2016.pdf

This certificate is valid for two years.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Khan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof K Khan
Chair: Departmental Research Committee
Department of Communication Science



POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS

PART 2

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH

1.1 Moral principles

UNISA promotes the following four internationally recognised moral principles of ethics as bases for research:

- autonomy (research should respect the autonomy, rights and dignity of research participants)
- beneficence (research should make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people)
- non-maleficence (research should not cause harm to the research participant(s) in particular or to people in general)
- justice (the benefits and risks of research should be fairly distributed among people)

These principles are not ranked in any order of preference. In disputes a balance between the four principles should be pursued.

1.2 General ethics principles

In addition to, and expanding on, the above moral principles, the following ten general ethics principles should be adhered to by researchers. Again, the ethics principles may not, by themselves, resolve all ethical problems and dilemmas which confront researchers. Researchers may be required to balance the demands made by moral principles of research and to privilege one principle over another, depending on the context and circumstances of the research involved.

1.2.1 Essentiality and relevance

Before undertaking research adequate consideration should be given to existing literature on the subject or to the issue under

study, and to all available alternatives. In view of the scarcity of resources in South Africa, it should be clearly demonstrated that the research is in pursuit of knowledge and/or the public good.

1.2.2 Maximisation of public interest and of social justice

Research should be carried out for the benefit of society, and with the motive of maximising public interest and social justice. All efforts should be made to make public in an appropriate manner and form, and at an appropriate time, information on the research undertaken, as well as the results and implications of the completed research.

1.2.3 Competence, ability and commitment to research

Researchers should be both personally and/or professionally qualified for the research that they undertake. A commitment to research in general and to the relevant subject in particular is an essential prerequisite for good and

ethical research.

1.2.4 Respect for and protection of the rights and interests of participants and institutions

Researchers should respect and protect the dignity, privacy and confidentiality⁴ of participants and where relevant, institutions. Researchers should ensure that the personal information of participants used for research purposes is adequately protected to prevent possible loss, damage and/or unauthorised access as required by Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, No. 4 of 2013. They should never expose such participants and institutions to procedures or risks not directly attached to the research project or its methodology. Research and the pursuit of knowledge should not, in themselves, be regarded as the supreme goal at the expense of the rights of participants and institutions.

1.2.5 Informed and non-coerced consent

Autonomy requires that individuals' participation should be freely given, based on informed consent and for a specific purpose, as required by the POPI Act. Direct or indirect coercion, as well as undue inducement of people in the name of research should be avoided. These act as barriers to autonomous decision making and may result in people consenting against their better judgment to participate in studies that may involve risks.

1.2.6 Respect for cultural differences

Researchers should treat research participants as unique human beings within the context of their community systems, and should respect what could be traditionally sacred and secret. Research should preferably be undertaken with, the members of an identified community or communities rather than merely about such community(ies). In some situations the consent of “gatekeepers” may have to be obtained in addition to that of research participants.

1.2.7 Justice, fairness and objectivity

Criteria for the selection of research participants should be fair, as well as being scientific. Easily accessible individuals or groups should not be inordinately burdened with repeated demands on their time and knowledge by the researcher.

1.2.8 Integrity, transparency and accountability

The conduct of research should be honest, fair and transparent. Researchers should be honest about their own limitations, competence, belief systems, values and needs. The contribution of other researchers or members of the research team should be properly acknowledged. Researchers should not abuse their positions or knowledge for personal power or gain.

1.2.9 Risk minimisation

Researchers should ensure that the actual benefits to be derived by the

⁴ That is, the nondisclosure of personal information (e.g. direct quotations or identifiable images) to others. Participants may consent to disclosure, preferably in writing.

participants or society generally from the research clearly outweigh any possible risks, and that participants are subjected only to those risks that are clearly necessary for the conduct of the research. Researchers should ensure that these risks are assessed and that adequate precautions are taken to minimise and mitigate risk in line with the UNISA Research Ethics Risk Assessment Standard Operating Procedure.

1.2.10 Non-exploitation

There should be no exploitation of research participants, researchers (including students and junior members),

communities, institutions or vulnerable people. The researchers should ensure that the use of the participants' personal information is done in line with the requirements of the POPI Act (4 of 2013) and should ensure that the information is not used for unlawful and secondary purposes incompatible with the original purpose consented by participants. There should be benefits to the community in which research is conducted. As far as possible, feedback should be given to participants and other relevant stakeholders. When research is carried out with communities they must receive feedback on the results of the research.

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND PARTICIPANTS

- 2.1 Participants should be seen as indispensable and worthy partners in research. Researchers should respect and protect the rights and interests of participants at every stage and level of research and acknowledge their contribution.
- 2.2 The risks and benefits of the research to the prospective participants should be fully weighed and the participants must be informed of them. Research that could lead to unnecessary physical, social and/or psychological harm should not be undertaken. Researchers should identify potential risks to participants and make provision for avoiding them. When risks form part of the conduct of the study, efforts should be made to mitigate the risks and protect the participants.
- 2.3 All steps should be taken to prevent harm (physical, psychological and/or spiritual) injury or loss of opportunity to participants. In the event of that harm, injury or loss of opportunity should occur, It should be dealt with in accordance with the relevant policy and/or legislative frameworks.
- 2.4 If during the course of the research it becomes evident that a participant has suffered harm in a way not foreseen by the researcher, this should immediately be reported to the university ERC and the relevant unit ERC for immediate investigation and action. Such action may, for example, include the need to refer the participant for counselling.
- 2.5 The criteria for selecting research participants should be fair.
- 2.6 A mutually beneficial agreement should be in place if a community or research setting is used as a continuous and long-term resource for collecting data to be used for curricular research or training.
- 2.7 The relevant social, cultural and historical background of participants should be taken into consideration in the planning and conduct of research.
- 2.8 Researchers should not infringe the autonomy of participants by resorting to coercion, undue influence or the promise of unrealistic benefits. Coercion may include taking undue advantage of individuals or abusing their participation in the research. Inducement may include a promise of material or financial gain, services or opportunities. No financial or other inducement should be offered to research

participants, whether children or adults, parents or guardians of children. Reimbursement of expenses (e.g. transport costs, meals) or compensation for the time or effort expended or any opportunity that

may be lost is allowed, on condition that all participants are offered similar reimbursement and that such reimbursement is only aimed at recompensing the participants.

- 2.9 Participants should be informed of the existence of the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and given details of the Ethics Review Committee. The policy should be made available to them if it can help them make an informed decision regarding their participation. Participants may not be instructed by researchers to participate in research under conditions that can be burdensome, abusive or threatening or that have the potential to risk or abuse the researcher's position. Unfairness or anything that prevents the participant from freely terminating his/her participation is not permissible nor should there be any negative implications should the participant choose to do so.

3. INFORMED CONSENT

- 3.1 Personal information should be collected in adherence to the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.
- 3.2 The participation of individuals should be based on their freely given, specific and informed consent. Researchers should respect their right at any stage to refuse to participate in particular aspects of the research or to decide to withdraw their previous given consent without demanding reasons or imposing penalties.
- 3.3 Participants should give their consent in writing and preferably accompanied by their signature. They, in turn, should be given written information containing adequate details of the research, including any risks associated with the study. If participants refuse to provide their consent in writing, consent may be recorded verbally, provided that verbal consent can be linked to the individual providing such verbal consent. For example, where a participant is illiterate, consent should be obtained in the presence of a literate witness who should verify and sign a document stating that informed consent had been given. Where the research is done on-line or electronically, informed consent can be obtained electronically but in a format separate from the on- line research in order to protect the identity of the participant.
- 3.4 Consent for participation in research is freely given and informed if
- 3.4.1 it is given without any direct/indirect coercion or inducement.
 - 3.4.2 prospective participants have been informed on the processing and purpose of the intended research.
 - 3.4.3 prospective participants have understood this information and have indicated so as per paragraph 3.3.
 - 3.4.4 the researcher has answered any question(s) about the research and their participation.
 - 3.4.5 it is given before research commences.
- 3.5 If research is conducted in a foreign country, the relevant standards as set out in the UNISA Research Ethics Policy will take precedence and will apply.
- 3.6 Non-disclosure of all information
- 3.6.1 In some situations the methodology or practicalities of a research project may

necessitate the concealment of information. This may be due to the possibility that behaviour changes may result or responses be affected when such details are revealed to participants. In such a case the researcher should determine beforehand.

- (a) whether the use of such a methodology is justified by its potential scientific, educational or applied benefits
- (b) whether alternative procedures which do not require the concealment of information should rather be used

3.6.2 If the use of such methodology is deemed justified by the researcher, there are steps which he/she should take:

- (a) When obtaining informed consent a detailed justification for not revealing all necessary information should be provided in the research proposal and methodology. This justification should be subject to scientific and ethical review by the relevant Ethics Review Committee. Only after the committee has given its approval should such research be undertaken.
- (b) The participants' right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality gains additional importance in such cases as they do not know the real purpose or objectives for which they are providing information.
- (c) Even should both scientific and ethical reviews allow that some of the information about the study need not be revealed, participants should be provided with all other information. In no case, however, should researchers withhold information regarding risks, discomfort, unpleasant emotional experiences, or any such aspect that would be material in making the decision to participate.
- (d) Participants should be given the reasons for not providing full information as soon as is possible after completion of the research. Where needed, services such as counselling and referral should be offered.

3.7 Consent where gatekeepers or organisational structures are involved

3.7.1 It is the responsibility of the primary researcher to ensure compliance with the research policy/directives of gatekeepers or organisational structures.

3.7.2 In some situations there may be a need to obtain permission from the "gatekeeper" to access the participants, information and/or research sites. Care should be taken in the following situations:

- (a) Permission obtained from the gatekeeper may not be substituted for the need to obtain separate and informed consent from the participants. The rights of participants in such a situation are the same as in all other cases.
- (b) In the process of research or data collection, care should be taken to ensure that the relationship between the gatekeeper and the participants is not jeopardised.

3.8 Vulnerable participants

- 3.8.1 Researchers should take particular care of the rights and interests of vulnerable participants.
 - 3.8.2 Research results that can be obtained if carried out on adults should never be carried out on children. Children should participate only when their participation is indispensable to the research. The protection and best interests of children are of prime importance.
 - 3.8.3 Therapeutic research or experimentation on a child under the age of 18 years may be conducted only if it is in the best interests of the child, and if the assent of the child (if he or she is capable of understanding) and the consent of his or her parent or guardian, has been obtained.
 - 3.8.4 Non-therapeutic research or experimentation may only be conducted on a child under the age of 18 years with the consent of the following persons: the Minister responsible for social development, the parent or guardian of the child, and the child if he or she is capable of understanding.
- 3.9 Where research involves the participation of persons unfamiliar with the language in which the research is to be conducted, the principle researcher must ensure that:
- 3.9.1 the participant's information statement has been translated into the participant's language
 - 3.9.2 it is his/her responsibility to ensure that the participant understands the information statement he/she has been given
 - 3.9.3 an interpreter is present during discussions with the participants about the project. As a rule the interpreter should be independent, but when the research proposal is of minimal risk, a relevant language-speaking relative or friend of the participant may be acceptable.

4. **PRIVACY, ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 4.1 All research participants have the right to privacy to the extent permitted by law or as directed by legal frameworks.
- 4.2 Privacy includes autonomy over personal information, anonymity and confidentiality, especially if the research deals with stigmatising, sensitive or potentially damaging issues or information. When deciding on what information should be regarded as private and confidential, the perspective of the participant(s) on the matter should be respected.
- 4.3 All personal information and records provided by participants should remain confidential. It should be made clear during data collection that confidentiality and anonymity will be safeguarded unless waived by the research participant. Whenever it is methodologically feasible, participants should be allowed to respond anonymously or under a pseudonym to protect their identity and privacy.
- 4.4 All personal information obtained directly or indirectly on or about the participants (e.g. names obtained by researchers from hospital and school records), as well as information obtained in the course of research which may reveal the identity of participants, should

remain confidential and anonymous. This guarantee should also be given when researchers ask consent to use data which is not already available within the public domain (e.g. classified data on prisoners held by the Department of Correctional Services).

- 4.5 In the case of observation (e.g. of a public scene) steps should be taken to ensure that the information will not be used or published in a form in which the individuals could be identified.
- 4.6 Researchers should maintain privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of information in collecting, creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of personal records and data under their control, whether these are written, automated or recorded in any other medium, including computer equipment, graphs, drawings, photographs, films or other devices in which visual images are embodied.
- 4.7 Researchers should preserve research records for a minimum of five years (or as required by policy or legal frameworks) after the submission of the report or the results.
- 4.8 Researchers should take reasonable technical and operational steps to ensure that research records are stored in such a manner as to protect confidentiality of records and the anonymity of participants.
- 4.9 Codes or other identifiers should, where possible, be used to break obvious connections between data and individuals/organisations/institutions. Where there is a mixture of information obtained from the public domain and that obtained with the participants' informed consent, there should be no traceable link between the two sets of information.
- 4.10 Confidentiality and anonymity of participants and their localities should be maintained when reporting to clients/sponsors/funders. Participants should not be identified or made identifiable in the report unless there are clear reasons for doing so. If the researcher or institution needs to identify participants or communities in the report, their informed consent allowing such disclosure should be obtained, preferably in writing.
- 4.11 Research findings published in the public domain (e.g. theses and articles) which relate to specific participants (e.g. organisations or communities) should protect their privacy. Identifiers which could be traced back to the participants in the study should not be included. However, public interest may outweigh the right to privacy, and may require that participants be named in reports (e.g. when child labour is used by a firm).
- 4.12 Participants' consent should be sought where data identifying them are to be shared with individuals or organisations who are not part of the research team.
- 4.13 The obligation to maintain privacy, anonymity and confidentiality extends to the entire research team, other researchers at UNISA, UNISA administrative employees, and all persons (from or outside UNISA) not directly associated with the research who may possibly have access to the information.

5. COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

- 5.1 In national and international collaborative research the parties are host institutions, collaborating institutions, researchers from both institutions, research participants and/or communities.
- 5.2 There should be clear justification for the need for and benefit of collaborative research.

- 5.3 Research involving human participants must not commence without ethics approval by the Ethics Review Committees of all collaborating institutions. This requirement may be waived under certain conditions by an Ethics Review Committee.
- 5.4 Research cannot commence without informed consent from participants and/or communities.
- 5.5 There may be no exploitation of institutions, researchers, research participants or communities.
- 5.6 Institutions and researchers should assist indigenous communities and traditional societies to protect their knowledge and resources, and should respect that which is traditionally sacred and secret.
- 5.7 Researchers involved in international collaborative research should have some understanding of, and be sensitive to, the social, economic and political conditions in which the research is carried out. This will alert them to the need to protect research participants who are, for example, subject to deprivations through poverty.

Acknowledgements and works consulted

1. Belmont Report (1978) (<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.htm>)
2. Intellectual Property Amendments Bill of 2010
3. Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013
4. South African Human Sciences Research Council *Draft Code of Research Ethics*
<http://www.hsrc.ac.za/about/researchEthics/draftCode.html>
5. Stellenbosch University Framework Policy for the Assurance and Promotion of Ethically Accountable Research
(http://www0.sun.ac.za/research/assets/files/Policy_Documents/Framework%20Policy_for_the_Assurance_and_promotion_of_Ethically_Accountable_Research_at_SU.doc)
6. South African Medical Research Council *Guidelines on Ethics for Medical Research: General Principles (Book 1)* (2002)
7. University of Pretoria Code of Ethics for Research
(www.ais.up.ac.za/research/docs/code_ethics.pdf)
8. University of Johannesburg Research Policy and Strategy
(<http://www.uj.ac.za/EN/Research/Research%20Information/Pages/ResearchPolicies.aspx>)
9. University of Kwazulu-Natal Research Policy V
(<http://research.ukzn.ac.za/research-ethics/Overview.aspx>)

